Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyusoukyoku

Book 11

(デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲)

Death Marching to the Parallel World Rhapsody

Ainana Hiro

(愛七ひろ)

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Artist : shri

Story Description:

Suzuki, an adult programmer, suddenly notice that he's thrown into another world wearing a casual clothes at level 1. He gained high level and treasures after using the 3-times-disposable-magic, Meteor Shower, once. After that he intend to do another world "sightseeing tours"? Meeting 3 beast girls, beautiful purple and black haired sisters and an eccentric blond haired elf girl along with various people during his trip. Although occasionally fighting demon and demon lord, this is a heartwarming fantasy story at heart.

Original Story can be found here: Link

Transation source can be found here: Link

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Credits

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14-1. Sightseeing Base

*

Satou's here. When I hear about personal airplane, I imagine it to be a special high performance craft, but in actuality, I think that that person in question would have customized it so much that it'd be a [hard to use by other people] airframe. Mass-produced airplanes are the best after all.

◇

"It's the seaaaaaaaa!"
"Sea~?"
"Sea nanodesu!"

With Arisa in swimsuits leading, Tama and Pochi who are also in swimsuits run on the sandy beach toward the sea.

I see them while relaxing on a beach chair.

"Pochi Tama, Boost On!"
"Roger~?"
"Aye aye sir nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama run on the sea surface while lifting Arisa from both sides.
Apparently, they've mastered the technique Liza used to walk on the water surface back then.

"Uhahahahaha"
"Nyahaha~?"
"This is fun nodesu!"

I reach my hand to the side table while looking at those energetic children.
I put the straw of the cooled tropical drink in my mouth and lightly suck it, the flavor of summer spreads in my mouth.

"Pochi, balance~"
"Ah, nanodesu."
"Uhhyaaaaaaa"

Over at the sea, Pochi couldn't maintain her water surface float, Tama and Arisa whose legs were entangled with Pochi's tumbled together, and lastly the three made a huge water splash.

"Are you alright?"
"Uy.... I thought I'm gonna die."
"Huhuh~?"
"It's Master nanodesu!"

Being called back by Unit Arrangement, the three are sitting under the beach parasol in their own style each.
Tama is wearing pink-colored separate swimsuits, Pochi's swimsuit has the same model as Tama's but they're yellow. Tama's is of the skirt type, Pochi's is of the short pant type.

Arisa is wearing an old school swimsuit model.
Of course, there's a tag written with [Arisa] sewn on the chest area.
She's devoted to the cliche like always.

In addition, their swimsuits are made from the newly developed expensive synthetic fiber.
Using the information I got from Lost Knowledge skill, I made it from crude oil found in the underground labyrinth.

It seems like it'd become the target of the god's punishment, so I don't

intend to popularize it.

"Satou, look."

Mia appeared wearing white and light blue stripped bikini, and twirled once.
Her hair which is usually in twintail style is bundled like Zena-san's, it feels fresh.

"Yup, you look cute."
"Yay."

When I honestly praised her, Mia clung to my neck.

I put the glass on the side table.
Because--.

"Tama too~"
"Pochi wants to stick together too!"
"W-wait, that's unfair!"

--The children jumped at me mimicking Mia.

I stop their momentum with [Magic Hand], catching the three gently.
It goes without saying that I put Arisa in a position where she can't sexually harass me.

"Everyone, you're troubling Master you know?"

The one who told everyone to be prudent was Lulu who's wearing a monokini with a cardigan on the top.
Her back and shoulder line can't be seen due to the cardigan, but her belly button and cleavage are peeking from the gap, the immoral feeling is overflowing.

Yup, I'm glad that I stopped Arisa from making Lulu wear the [Maid School Swimsuit].

"Master, completed the transportation of the swim ring and the beach ball, so I report."

From behind Lulu, Nana appeared while carrying a large quantity of play equipment.
Unfortunately, due to the plot of the impregnable fortress pair, Nana is not wearing bikini but a one-piece type swimsuit.

Although, as the consequence of her plain swimsuit, Nana's breasts look like it'll burst open from the inside, asserting themselves.
I think they should assert themselves that boldly from now on.

In addition, Nana's slaves, Shiro and Crow aren't here since they've gone to school.
The plan is for them to commute to the school from Pendragon Mansion during our sightseeing tour. In the future, I want to establish schools in the labyrinth city or Muno city, and have those girls be the teachers.

"Ah, it's Liza nanodesu!"

Pochi who's checking the water spray at the sea shouts out while tilting her body.

Before long, Liza who's wearing a traditional sleeved swimsuit comes from the sea while carrying a yellow object. The stripe pattern of orange and white hurt the eyes.

"Master, I have completed the test run of the banana boat."
"Was there any problem with the operation?"
"Yes, despite its high speed, the retention force of the seat appears to be

low. In case of a battle, I'm afraid that there's a high possibility the passengers get thrown the sea."

Liza.... That's an equipment for playing.

"Then would you like to examine it once again to improve its performance?"
"As you wish."

While giving another drink to Liza who looked satisfied, I gave her a new instruction.
It looks like she likes the banana boat, she should play it again.

"Master, hoping to participate in the valuation of the battle boat."
"Tama too~?"
"Pochi wants to participate too nodesu!"

Nana, Tama, and Pochi looked at me with sparkling eyes, so I took out the second banana boat from my storage and gave it to Nana.

"You're not going Arisa?"
"Hm~, playing with those four sounds thrilling in a different meaning, so I'll go at it later."

Lulu quietly refused while smiling, so I only asked Arisa, and got such answer.

"Satou! The maidens have arrived~"

When I turn around, Hikaru who had come out of the Arabian Night-like palace shouted out loud to me.
Hikaru is wearing bikini with pareo. The bikini chest part is strictly guarded by something called tiered frills.

"Oh, it's Mito-tan. Hiding her desolate chest like that is a good decision isn't it."

Arisa pompously criticized Mito over my shoulders.

Since she stealthily stroked my chest, I told her, "Sexual harassment is forbidden", and make her leave my shoulder.

"Arisa, come here. I have something to talk to you about."
"No nein, it was the evil concealed in this left arm..."

Led by hands, Lulu pulled Arisa away from the beach.
Recently, Lulu is strict with Arisa's sexual harassment, so she's probably going to remonstrate her.

I return my line of sight toward Mito, and greet Mito and the other four girls who came with her.
I had invited Sera, Zena-san and Lady Karina to the secret hideout before, but it's the first time for the last one.

The fourth person is not Aze-san, but Princess Shistina who's traveling together with us in the sightseeing tour.
Unlike Zena-san and the three other girls, I can't trust her unconditionally, so I've made her to rigidly keep my secret with [Contract] skill.

Actually I wanted the Princess to go indignant when I talked about [Contract] skill, but for some reason she gleefully accepted it.

Of course I haven't disclosed as much information as with the other girls. I've talked about the fact that I'm a [Hero] and the [Owner of Echigoya Firm], so even though she's accompanying the tour, my movement shouldn't get annoyingly restricted.

In addition, about this [Contract] skill, the maximum punishment in case of violation seems to differ in accordance to the skill level, in the case of maximum level like mine, it seems that she could end up in dying state. I tried it with a death penalty crime slave, so there's no mistake about it. Of course, I can adjust the punishment level, so I didn't set it at such a terrible setup.

While I was recalling such circumstance, a lone girl stepped out among the embarrassed group.

"Satou-san does it look good on me?"

The one who honestly asked was Sera with a slightly reddened face.
The white bikini with stringless shoulder is truly dazzling.

Her white legs that are usually hidden under the miko outfit are wonderful.
Even though they're hidden by a long pareo, they still give off neat and clean charm.

"Yes, they look really good on you."

As I praise her, her face reddens more, and let alone her ears, her shoulders even redden.

"It's a bit embarrassing, but I'm happy to hear Satou-san saying that."

If she showed such a bashful smile when it was just the two of us, I'm afraid that I'd inadvertently push her down.

Zena-san standing beside her was looking like she wanted to say something, so I praise her, "It really suits Zena-san too."

"T-thank you."

Seeing her fidgeting, trying to hide her body with her arms almost makes me feels strange.
Her swimsuit is the sharp-looking one normally used for swimming race.
It looks like a high-leg leotard, so it looks really good on Zena-san and her beautiful legs.

Maybe it's my imagination, but I feel glancing eyes since awhile ago.

Apparently, these secluded young women have no resistance against males in their swim wear.
The reason why these girls look embarrassed is not because of their swimsuits, but the problem seems to be with mine.

"....I-it's shameful desuwa!"

Lady Karina who objected is not wearing a swimsuit but a normal dress.

It's a natural thing to say with the ethic of Shiga Kingdom.
However, due to the thin fabric, Lady Karina's splendid silhouette is transparent from the bright sunlight, since it looks more erotic than swimsuits, I think she lacks persuasive power.

"Yes, I only recommended it because they're convenient attires for playing by the sea. I won't force you to wear them, please don't worry."

I told so to Lady Karina who shouted more due to her shame than resentment.
Rather, I was surprised that Sera and Zena-san appeared wearing swimsuits.

"Ara? Exposing your body to your future husband is not a shameful thing to do you know?"

Admonishing Lady Karina is Princess Shistina who's wearing a silk-made long gown.
Her statement is slightly troubling, but following after deaf protagonists' step, I wonderfully ignore it.

"Fu-future, husband--"

Lady Karina whose face is as red as a lobster seems to have reached the climax of her embarrassment by muttering that much, she runs off to the palace while leaving dust of cloud.
Of course I use my magic to put back the blown sand so it won't scatter away.

Swish, hearing that sounds, I turn my line of sight back to the princess.
The princess untie her sash sexily, her transparent silk gown drops down to the sand.

What appear behind it are tube top separate swimsuits.
When a princess wears it, it gives off the immoral feeling of corset.

I say some words of praise toward the princess who's taking a pose while emanating the [Praise me] aura, and then offer her the beach chair beside me.

When I rang the bell on the side table, little figures jumped out of the palace.

"Have you called, Master!"
"How may I help you?"
"Please order anything you want."

The little girls who look like pre-school students are looking at me while waiting for the order.

"Please get enough drinks and assorted fruits for the people here."
"Yes!"
"Understood~"
"Please wait for a bit!"

The little girls who are wearing Arabian Night style servant clothes go back to the palace as fast as the wind.
Those girls are the brownies I've hired to take care of the palace.

They look like little girls, but every one of them is a fully adult woman. They're of the same race as the manager of the labyrinth city's [Ivy Mansion], Leriril. Their performances are a bit below Leriril, but since there are a lot of them, I've left them to take care of not only the palace, but this whole secret hideout.
The facilitator of these brownies is Leriril's aunt, Loriril. She looks like a little girl outwardly, but it seems she's more than 100 year old.

And then, the last guest appears together with the addition of the tropical drinks.

"Satou-san. I've finished setting up the barrier."

Yuika in a white kimono walks on the white sandy beach.
The white skin that looks like snow peeking from the kimono sleeves and the nape is dazzling.

In addition, her short horn peculiar of a goblin is hidden behind a bandana.

"Thank you. I'm sorry for leaving it all to you."

I offered her a chair while apologizing.
I asked her to set up the barrier since I heard it'd take several days to do it and there wasn't anyone around me that could do it, but it completed

faster than planned.
Leaving the job to other people while I'm having something like a vacation surrounded by beauties, I feel slightly awkward.

Although, Yuika herself doesn't seem to mind such a thing.

"This wand is amazing. The range expansion performance is higher than a holy wand."
"That's because it's a specialized wand--"

I stop Yuika who's submitting the wand to me with my hand.

"--If it's alright with you, please take it. I've adjusted it for Yuika-san, so I'd be glad if you use it."
"Y-Yes. I'll be using it regularly."

Yuika smiles while holding the emerald green wand, looking so happy.

I asked her to create the anti-god barrier for three areas of the secret hideout.
Every area is a sub-space created with my forbidden spell [Another World].

One of them is this southern island where everyone is right now as the base.
At first I planned to use the island itself as the secret hideout, but dangerous creatures of the sea never decreased no matter how many times we eliminated them, so I copied that island into a sub-space.
Thus, even a defenseless princess can enjoy this beach worry-free.

In addition, this sub-space only contain the island that's as large as the Awajima island and sea that's five times the island's size.

The second area is a farm area with Oyugock Dukedom's terrain as the

base.
This one has virgin forest besides the center part where the portal is, so it needs to be developed from now on.
The size is as big as the original dukedom. It also has the sea, so cultivating marine products seems possible.

And the third one is the desert area for training and experimenting.
It uses the desert to the west of the Labyrinth City Selbira as the base, so I can test magic as much as I want.
There's only a few magic among the forbidden spells that I can't use there.

Having such circumstance, we don't have to worry about the god's punishment even though we're wearing swimsuits made from synthetic fiber of modern age.
I can't thank you Yuika enough.

After introducing Yuika to everyone, Hikaru asked her doubtfully.

"I probably mistakes you with someone else, but are you maybe the『Queen of Onikin』Folnis?"
"Um...."

Apparently, Hikaru seems to know an old personality of Yuika who has multiple personalities.
Looks like that remark became the impetus, Yuika's oldest personality, Yuika 3 appeared.

If I'm not mistaken, Folnis is the chuuni name of Yuika 3.

"--What's this, aren't you Yamato? Have you come out of the barrier already? Didn't you say,『I'll sleep until my destined person wakes me up with a kiss』?"
"De-destined person--"

Looks like the barrier that protected Hikaru's cold sleep was Yuika's handiwork.

Leaving that aside, Hikaru. Don't say that troublesome remark while pointing your finger at me.
See, everyone is looking at me like I'm a cheating man.

I felt like it'd be dangerous if I left it alone, so I told Yuika, "She's a childhood friend and a co-worker of mine", and ended the strange conversation.

"Fumu, if this keeps up, the current Yuika would be at a disadvantage noja."

Glancing at Lulu and Sera, Yuika 3 asked, "Satou, give me swimsuits", so I gave several that looked like it'd fit Yuika.
Yuika 3 used her barrier skill to make a substitute locker room and changed her clothes.s

"How do I look, Satou!"
"It really suits you well."
"Alright--"

Her chest covered in a halter neck top looked clearly more filled up than her real body I saw back then, but I don't have any intention of pointing that out.
It's done naturally, so the other girls don't notice it.

"--H-huh? Eh?! Why am I in this outfit? D-don't tell me it's the first generation-sama's doing?"

It seems her personality has returned, she's trying to hide her body with her arms in panic.

I don't blame her for panicking considering the degree of exposure suddenly rose.

I put on the parka that I wore to Yuika.

....I felt that the pressure from behind rose at that moment, but it must've been my imagination.

◇

Including Yuika who had calmed down, everyone enjoyed the swimming and the sensation of the sea waves.

For some reason the sea has waves even though this is in the sub-space. It must be like the image of the sun in the sky, it must be a part of the magic that composes the sub-space.

In addition, according to the head maid Loriril, Lady Karina came several times until the palace's entrance while wearing swimsuits, but it seemed she couldn't make her decision, and now she's curled up in her own room in the palace.
I plan to be in the beach in front of the palace for the time being, so I expect her to show off her swimsuit sooner or later.

"U~n, when you're playing on the beach, you'd crave not only the shaved ice and soft cream but also the [Garnish-less Curry], the [Stretching Ramen], the [Violent Roasted Squid with Burning Soy Sauce Smell], the [Immoral Yakisoba], and the [Sacrilegious Roasted Corn]."

Arisa declared so while eating the shaved ice with strawberry syrup. There were some weird ornaments in the end, but since it's Arisa, there's no deep meaning to it.

Pochi, Tama and Mia ate too fast, they're holding their foreheads in agony.
Since Lulu has warned it beforehand, the other girls are enjoying the coldness slowly.

"I didn't prepare them since they don't match the vacation in the southern island. Why don't we play in『Beach House』set next time?"
"Un, then, let's do watermelon breaking!"

That sounds really fun.

Some tactless beeping interrupted such fun time.
The communication linked on the Menu is coming from the trial unmanned airship.

I tap on the caller's mark and connect the call.

『Master. The target point, Labyrinth City Selbira has been captured in the visual. We will arrive in 30 minutes. Requesting your return to the captain's seat.』
"Okay."

I shortly replied to the [Scarecrow 10] the cruise golem that's steering the airship.
The scarecrow's voice is like the old voice synthesizer software, the intonation is awkward.

I compiled the source of the scarecrow's voice by asking one of Echigoya Firm's slave maids.
I thought of using Lulu's or Tifaliza's voice, but they were too busy it was not possible.

"It seems the airship is going to arrive at Selbira soon. Please change your

clothes and wait at the entrance."

I tell so to everyone and then go back to the captain seat with Unit Arrangement ahead of them.

"Give me the steering report."
『Cruise test all green. Recorded maximum speed is 300 KM/H. It could reach higher speed, but taking account of the remaining magic power, I ended the test there. Continuing on--』

While listening to the scarecrow which I had left to take care of the bridge, I clean the ocean water with purification magic.

This personal airship is installed with the new type of aerodynamic engine that Prof. Jahad has developed, it's equipped with the function to alter the aerodynamic engine's buoyancy into thrusting force during the cruise.
Its only flaw is that the mileage is bad, so it can't be installed in an airships that use the general-purpose magic furnace.
In addition, it can go even faster if it uses the booster, but since it needs magic power supply from me, I didn't use it during the automatic test.

I change to my usual noble clothes with Quickdress, and look outside through the window that's made of a thin piece of glass-like object.

"It seems there were some bird strikes, but the window doesn't seem to have any scratch."
『Yes, Master. I recommend deploying the defensive curtain [Screen Shield] during the flight.』
"Okay. I approve it."

I approved the scarecrow's suggestion.

This window is made of synthetic diamond, so it'd be fine even against

normal bird strikes, but it's probably going to get damaged if it runs into beetle type monsters.

Diamond is weak against heat though, so it might be a good idea to shave the whale's crystalline lens and turn it into the canopy.

In addition, this window was made using the original magic [Charcoal to Diamond] that I remodeled from the advanced magic [Flesh to Stone]. Creating diamonds from charcoals without high temperature-pressure, truly magic.

There's also [Sand to Glass] magic sub-type.
There were glass windows in the house created by [Create House] back then, I made the magic from that code library.

Making use of this code, I also made transparent corundrum from aluminium oxide from bauxite.

Securing the bauxite was annoying, but since it's possible to mine it in the island where the palace island is modeled after, it should be easy from now on.
I should be able to make sapphire and ruby if I can add color to it.

The composition of emerald is complex, so I haven't started on that one.

『Master, entering the landing sequence. Please give me the instruction as soon as possible if you wish to change the landing site.』
"There's no change. Confirm the topography of the landing site."
『Aye aye sir.』

While confirming the ground's undulation, the airship lowers its altitude. It's quite an excellent automatic navigation program.

Its experience level doesn't seem like it has crashed seven times near the

Royal Capital.
There wasn't any dangerous scene for the past 10 days after all.

『Master, there are people in the landing site.』

It seems a lot of people have gathered to meet us before the Labyrinth City's Pendragon Mansion.
I order it to land on the farm near the mansion.

I peek at the ground using [Clairvoyance] and [Clairhearing].

"Uwah, it's an airship!"
"It's a small airship."
"I wonder if master is riding in that?"
"It's landing here instead of the usual place for the airships, so that must be true right?"
"Then, Arisa-chan is in there."
"Nana-shama too?"
"She'll call us young organisms?"
"She will surely hug young organisms."
"I'll ask Pochi-san and Tama-san for the souvenirs from the Royal Capital."
"I'll get knocked down silly by Liza-san after a long while!"
"Ah, I can finally listen to Mia-sama's music."

I'm glad that they're all welcoming. There was one strange thing mixed among them though....
There were many "Young Master~" for me too, but I'll be intruding them in the night anyway, so there's no need to pick it up.

◇

I went back to the secret hideout's palace to pick everyone up.
Initially I planned to link the gate to five places, [Palace Island], [Workshop Satellite], [Echigoya Absolute Secret Control Room], [Labyrinth Villa], and [Personal Airship], but since I haven't completed making the golem that would controls them, I'm working as the temporary transporter.
The reason why Boruenan Forest isn't included among them is to prevent the pixies from intruding in.

And then, the airship lands in the meadow.

The plan is for the Pendragon Team and Lady Karina to get off at the labyrinth city.
After finishing our business in the labyrinth city, I, Sera, the princess, and Zena-san are going to depart for the journey.

Of course that's the official story.

In actuality, we can come and go freely using the gate, so everyone is going to raise their level during the journey, and once we arrive at the touring spots, everyone is going to enjoy the sightseeing together.
The labyrinth group will be in two different places, but this world has no real time information network like in the modern Japan, so even if the rumor spreads, using the airship to transport them during their labyrinth exploration should work as an excuse.

In addition, Hikaru, or rather, Duchess Mito is staying in the Royal Capital. Her setting is that she's a frail woman living in the Duke Mitsukuni mansion in the Royal Capital, so there will be almost no problem even if she's absence.
Since the king and the prime minister know Mito's true identity, they should understand it all as "As expected of Ancestor King-sama."

"Welcome back, Viscount-sama."

While greeting Ms. Miteruna and little girl maids, I salute to my acquaintances flooding the mansion.
I'd take the whole day if I were to great everyone, so I greet them adequately, and then go to where the authorities of the labyrinth city are gathering while only bringing Sera and the princess.

Since we're only going to stay for two days in the labyrinth city, let's do this quick!

14-2. At the Labyrinth City

*

Satou's here. When I saw the unusually realistic animal toys sold with food on a convenience store, I remember secretly wanting to collect them all. It's the same thing with gacha in recent the social games.

◇

"Your Royal Highness Shistina, it is truly an honor to be graced with your presence."

Marquis Ashinen said such words to us who visited the viceroy mansion.
The people present here aren't only the Marquis couple, the nobles of the labyrinth city with peerage are also lined up in the entrance.
Usually it's the maids and the butlers who would meet the guest, but as expected of a princess, moreover, since she's the little sister of next king from the same mother, the treatment is different.

After princess Shistina greeted them like a royalty would, Sera and I also greeted them and then we were guided to the usual salon.
The salon that usually felt too large now feels a bit cramped due to the amount of guests.
Coming here bringing a lot of sweets as the souvenir is good decision.

"Sir Pendragon, this is a present to celebrate for you climbing the peerage rank and your inauguration to be the Tourist Ministry vice minister. This is not just from me, but all 17 noble houses in the Labyrinth City."

Marquis Ashinen is giving me a small box that has careful craftsmanship.
Following after him, the other nobles also congratulated me.

"May I open it?"
"Umu."

Opening a present like this immediately after receiving it is the proper manner in Shiga Kingdom, but I inadvertently asked due to my Japanese nature.

--Geh, are you serious?

My surprise surpassed the Poker Face skill as I stared the content of that small box.

"It was worth it getting that by exerting all means, seeing you be that surprised."
"...T-thank you very much."

I take out the [Chant Orb] from the small box and smile at the Marquis and the others.
According to the AR beside the orb, it seems to be something from Saga Empire's [Bloodsucking Labyrinth].

There's a [Light Magic Orb] beside it.
The Chant Orb must be an extra.
They should be quite rare, but getting abundant of drops right when you don't need them happens in games and another world.

It was quite unusual for me to show a worldly desire, so it seems they asked the merchants to look for them as a surprise present.
I'm very grateful. It's not like the thought, "just what was all of my hardships for", didn't flash on my mind, but grumbling after they have gone through a lot of trouble for my sake would make me get hit with a divine retribution.

I feel bad for only receiving things, so I signal the marquis house butler and make him take out the souvenir I've passed on to him earlier.

"These are the tiara and the emerald I saw back then! So you remember."
"Yes, they're articles befitting of Marchioness after all."

I'm indebted to the Marchioness for helping me making the personal connections in the Royal Capital, so I got her the [Tiara] and the [Egg-sized Emerald] that she wanted.
I've sucked up a lot of money from the Royal Capital's nobles, so buying these were no problem at all.

"My! What a beautiful glass-work."
"Satou-sama, is this handicraft the work of a Royal Capital's workshop?"
"Behold! This small handicraft looks as if it's alive."

In addition to that, I presented other things like ancestor king glass statue and small-sized animal glass statues for the servants.
The former was well received as planned, but it seems the marchioness and the noble wives like the latter too.

These were easily made with my original magic [Glass Art], a spell created from [Mud Art] and [Sand to Glass].
At first I made this magic since I wanted a bowl for the shaved ice, but it looks like I can use this for many other things.

"Marquis, I've left the new work to the butler, please enjoy it."
"....B-by new work you mean a work of art?"
"Yes."

It'd cause discord if I only gave the present to the Marchioness, so I haven't forgotten the Marquis's share too.
His present is not my own work, but a [Nude Statue of Man] I got from the Duchy Capital using Unit Arrangement. The Marquis once said, "My

friend obtained the new work in the Duchy Capital."

I gave an Echigoya Firm-made set of [Vitality Medicine], [Gloss Skin Medicine], [Hair Growth Formula] to each head of the noble houses. It seems they're hard to get in the labyrinth city, so they were exaggeratedly pleased.

After we had finished exchanging souvenirs, it was the pleasant chat time like usual.
The one that was different was that they wanted me to talk about the gist of the sakuramochi demon attack on the Royal Capital, and Hero Nanashi and the Golden Knights.
It has already been half a month since the incident, so the details should have circulated in the labyrinth city too, but they probably want to hear the raw story from people who were there.

"--The the Royal Capital reconstruction is going well isn't it."
"Yes, it is the result of Hero Nanashi's effort."

The princess replied to the Marchioness with a clear smile.
Please stop glancing at me when you were saying Hero Nanashi.

After that serious talk was over, this time it moved to love story.

"I want to hear the beginning of love of the princess and Satou-dono."
"We met by accident--"

One of the countesses from the Marchioness's circle asked about the topic.
The princess then talked about how she met me with Arisa and Mia as the intermediary, and how I saved her when a monster attacked like it was some sort of heroic story.
Of course she had shrewdly cut the matter about Hisui and my senseless action.

"I want to hear about the start of romance of『Oracle Miko』Sera-sama. You're an entourage of the vice minister, but in actuality, you're the candidate for the second wife right?"

The viscountess asked about Sera's real objectives.

"Yes, you may take it as so. I have acquired the permission from grandfather and father after all--"

After saying so, Sera turned toward me while smiling.

....It's the first I've heard of that though?

"Sera-sama, I think it's better if you talk about that once it's official."
"Yes, that's right."

I warned Sera since it'd be troublesome if some strange rumor circulated.
She obediently assented, and closed the uncertain talk.

Whenever Sera fixes her sitting, she gets closer to me, I wonder if it's just my imagination....
I feel like she's burying the outer moat bit by bit.

Still, I'm glad that I've left Lady Karina in the mansion.
I have a feeling that it'd have been more troublesome if she were here.

◇

After finishing the tea party, we went to the Labyrinth Army garrison.

"""Young Master! Welcome back!"""

Those greetings came from some unfamiliar townspeople and explorers when we passed through the food stall for explorers and the street in front of the Explorer Guild.

For now, I wave my hands through the window.

"You're quite popular."

The princess looked lightly surprised to my popularity.

"They probably remember my face from the『Floormaster』subjugation parade."
"Satou-san, you don't have to be so modest. Satou-san's achievement is famous even in the Royal Capital."
"You're exaggerating."

Replying Sera with a wry smile, I turn around to see some little cheering outside the window.

"Viscount-samaa"
"Young masterr"
"Satou onii-chaan"

Outside the carriage window, I saw little girls and children running after the carriage.

--Are they children of the orphanage?

I stealthily supported a child who tripped her feet with [Magic Hand].

The traffic decreased before long, and the carriage arrived at the destination.

◇

Having arrived at the labyrinth army garrison, we greeted General Eltar and visited the soldiers.
I only brought some famed liquor and smoked sakura salmon of the royal capital as the general and the soldier's souvenir, there's nothing special to mention.

There were these conversations at most.

"You should have been offered a seat of the Shiga Eight Swords, why did you decline?"
"That is too much of a burden for me. Being one of the Shiga Eight Swords requires one's individual strength after all."

General Eltar nodded to my answer while brushing his beard.
In the labyrinth city, it looks like I'm known more as the proprietor who has established explorer training and an orphanage, and also a politician who aligned himself with the marchioness faction rather than an explorer after all.

"So, as you're going to go around the world as the vice minister of the Tourism Ministry, what are your retainers going to do?"
"Liza and the others are going to continue to explore the labyrinth."
"I see--"

Perhaps, he's going to invite Liza and the others to the labyrinth army?
Or so I thought, but General Eltar said some unexpected things next.

"--If you're going to establish a private knight order in the labyrinth city, you can consult me."

I won't make something like private knight order.
It's not like I'll participate in a war anyway, I don't need a private knight order right?

Or rather, if I did make one, that could be an excuse to start a war.

So I thought, but since he said it out of kindness, I replied like a Japanese who could read the mood.

"I haven't thought about it for the time being, but I'll be pleased if I can consult with you when that time comes."
"Umu, you can freely come here."

General Eltar nodded like he was satisfied with my reply.
If I do need to consult with him, I'll bring not a bottle of the dragon spring liquor, but a whole barrel.

◇

"""Young Master! Let's have a feast!"""

When I went to the western Explorer Guild to visit the guildmaster, the drunk staff members and explorers greeted me unanimously.
Looks like they've opened the liquor barrel I sent to the guildmaster and the staff members, and have started a drinking bout already.
The sun is still high, they put the dwarves to shame....

"Ou! Satou, this is some good liquor! It'll disappear if you don't come soon!"

The guildmaster shouted out with a smile from center of the drinking bout.

I'd like to participate if I was alone, but since I'm with the princess and Sera, that'd be bad.

"Satou-sama, let me take part together with you."
"Eh? Y-your highness?"

It seems the princess is a regular drinker, she pulls my hands and walks toward the guildmaster.

"Oh? Are you already kept on a short leash? First time I meet ya I guess, your highness princess?"
"No, I once took a lecture by the fire magician during a ball in the Royal Capital."
"Ah! That little princess huh! I thought you were a strange princess, but you sure have good eyes for men!"
"Yes!"

Looks like the guildmaster is acquainted with the princess.

The princess drink the liquor that the guildmaster poured. She's quite a good drinker.
The movement of the throat swallowing the liquor looks captivating.

While I was being captivated by the princess, Sera who was sitting beside me pinched my lap.
Sera drank the liquor cup given by Staff Member A with a prickly expression.

"Satou-san! Satou-san is--"

Having drunk the liquor, Sera vigorously said as much and then she suddenly leaned on my shoulder as if her battery was cut.
Apparently, Sera who's been raised in the temple is weak to liquor.

On the other hand, the princess is drinking equally with the guildmaster.

"That was some good drink."
"I drank a lot in the evening parties to excuse myself out, so I became strong at it before I knew it."

I see, it's very like the princess.

"Satou is a bottomless pit too, you two will be a good couple."
"Thank you."

Without minding the guildmaster who called her with [You (anta)], the princess's red cheeks from the liquor reddened even more and she thanked her.
Looking at her, the men said out loud, "Riajuu explode!" with deep resentment.
The one spreading "riajuu" word must be Arisa.

During the drinking bout, I talk with the elf Ms. Sebelkea and the guild manager about their works.
The subject is about the guild administration as asked by Earl Seryuu.

"The compensation?"

Ms. Sebelkea asked shortly like an elf would.

"Please look at this."
"Hou? They'll give the priority for the commerce of the wyvern material and steady supply of the dragon white stones huh..."

I hand over the documents from Earl Seryuu to the manager.
Ms Selbera showed the shadow of a veteran suitable for her age on her young girl-like visage.

The dragon white stone which is the material for making the all-purpose antidote and the light yet highly defensive wyvern material are something that advanced explorers desire regardless of expense.
The all-purpose antidote especially, nobles who have a lot of enemies constantly seek for it, so the demand for it is unending.

At first there were also some medicinal herbs needed for stamina recovery medicine, but now that they can produce beria magic medicine locally the demand had abated, I canceled the plan.

"Looks like Earl Seryuu has quite an excellent adviser."
"Some benefactors and acquaintances of mine are in the Earldom after all."

I eluded Ms. Sebelkea's teasing without a fuss.

"Very well. I'll have the guildmaster sign it later."

I was finally able to get her consent.

"Can we use temporary employees from the explorer school to teach the management course?"
"Yes, I'll bring them tomorrow to visit here."
"Understood. Aside from that, Satou."

Finishing the work talk, Ms. Sebelkea who loosened her firm expression, changing back to party mode, talked too me.

"Our High-elves-sama frequently inquired about you, do you have any idea?"
"No, I don't."

If they have some business with me, they can always call me through Aze-san, and the elf forest that was in danger of the Space Kaiju was of a

different clan from Ms. Sebelkea's, so I really don't have the slightest idea.

"Just in case, Satou is a human right?"
"Yes, of course."

Even though I immediately replied to the puzzling question, I was puzzled myself in my mind.

There were many cases where that confidence was lost recently, but my race is still written as human on the status screen.
Ms. Sebelkea nodded to my answer like she was satisfied, and drank the fairy wine on her hand.

There's going to be a banquet in the viceroy mansion tonight, so I excused ourselves from the drinking bout before the princess got downed.
It seemed the princess was envious of Sera who was carried by me with a princess carry, she leaned her head on my shoulder while behaving like a spoiled child during the short time the carriage was returning, and let out a happy sigh.

◇

There were still some times before the dinner, so I went alone to the mansion where people from Earl Seryuu were staying in the labyrinth city.
It seemed the earl had told them about me, they easily received me.

"--training for management?"
"Yes, the guildmaster has kindly agreed to it. Of course, the advisor, Ms. Sebelkea, and the manager have pleasantly replied too."

The civil official opened her eyes wide when she heard about the

management thing.
There were also some people who said, "Just how", or "Did he use the Marchioness's connections?", in low voices.

I plan to introduce the civil officials to Ms. Sebelkea tomorrow morning.

"And for the on-site unit, the Mithril Explorer party, 『Blue Flame Axe』 is going to teach them."
"Mi-Mithril?!"

The captain of the on-site unit, Knight Henz, stood up and kicked the chair down due to his surprise.
The soldiers also began to rustle.

The [Blue Flame Axe] that I mentioned is one of the parties that subjugated the floormaster together with Jeril and his party.
I tried negotiating with all prominent parties during my stay in the Royal Capital, but the Blue Flame Axe was the only one who willingly consented.

Their reward is an introduction to Echigoya Firm.
Using the letter of introduction I got from the first prince Soltrick back then, it seemed the members of Blue Flame Axe party ordered magic weapons and wands they wanted.

I only intermediated them and loaned them money for their fund shortage.
On top of securing personnels, I got them to experiment--er, comment on the new weapons, there's no loss for me.

"Yes, let's have a formal introduction tomorrow morning."

After telling so, I explain the route for the exploration with a map and the program to the Knight Henz.

Recovery potion made from beria has been popularized, so there should be no problem even if we choose a slightly dangerous route.
They have strong entourages too.

"Viscount-sama, we're lacking one magic soldier in this plan?"

Captain Riro who's checking the documents beside Knight Henz asked about Zena-san who wasn't included in the program.
If I'm not mistaken, he's the direct superior of Zena-san.

"She's transferred over to the Tourism Ministry to act as a guard and also a secretary. Earl Seryuu and Marientail-san have consented to this, so please don't worry about it."

Even though I told him so, captain Riro's face still looked gloomy.

Right then, Zena-san appeared along with the members of Zena Squad.
The girls had horse transports so they went back through the land route, looks like they got to the labyrinth city at a good timing.

"Zena Squad's vice head, Iona and three members, have returned to the labyrinth city!"

Ms. Iona reported not to Knight Henz but Captain Riro.
I wonder if it's because he's their direct superior.

After thanking them, Captain Riro confirmed Zena-san who's in military uniform about the thing earlier.

"Y-yes. There is no mistake. I was in the place when Earl-sama approved it."
"I see--"

Captain Riro is finally convinced after Zena-san assured it.

Some noisy voices sounded behind him.

"Is Zena-san alright alone?"
"Do you want to go too?"
"You did it, Zena-cchi! Now the mistress seat is certain for you!"

Every member of Zena Squad called out to Zena-san.

"Amazing, Viscount-sama is as great as Viscount Belton isn't he?"

Responding to Lilio, a soldier girl called Gayana made a fuss.

"It's marrying to a rich man!"
"Awesome"
"Treat me something next time okay!"

The other female soldiers also cheered on Zena-san.

On the other hand, gloomy mood of grudge and depression came flowing from the male soldiers.
So there were really a lot of hidden fans of the plain cute Zena-san after all.

◇

Four of us including Lady Karina went to the banquet and relished on the elegant dishes made by the viceroy mansion's chef.
When I left my seat during the chat for the nature's call, the Marchioness informant contacted me, wearing maid clothes.

"So it seems you're engaged with the princess. I'm jealous--"
"Leaving that aside, do you have any new information?"

I stopped the informant's lip service and urged her to cut to the chase. Some bad rumor would float around if I looked too close to a maid in the viceroy mansion after all.

"Have you heard that three kingdoms neighboring Holy Kingdom Parion united and attacked it two days ago?"
"No, first time I've heard of it."

As usual she got information from the western countries fast.

"It was a large army totaling at 60.000 troops."

--Past tense huh.

"According to the information that just came in, that large army was trampled down by the 10.000-strong Holy Kingdom Parion so-called 『Army of God』, and they were repelled back to their own kingdoms."

Good grief, please stop using such dangerous words like [Army of God]. I'm afraid that it'd really end up setting up a flag for a fight against the God's Apostles.

--However, there's something I want to know first.

"By the way, do you know the reason why the three kingdoms united?"
"It's an absurd story--"

The informant is hesitating to answer my question.

After hesitating with suggestive behaviors, she opens her mouth.

"They claim that the pope of Holy Kingdom Parion, Zazaris, is a demon lord."

....Apparently, my sightseeing tour won't start for a while.

14-3. At the Labyrinth City (2)

*

Satou's here. "Incidents and plots are interlinked", so said the protagonist with unparalleled intelligence from a story. Just reading it is good and all, but when I'm actually getting rolled up in one, I'll go and strike the chain's chock.

◇

--A new demon lord huh.

I write the information I heard earlier, "The pope of Holy Kingdom Parion, Zazaris, is a demon lord", into the memo pad.

"Viscount-sama, may I continue the talk?"

The female informant timidly interrupted when I was thinking while staring at the memo.
It's quite rare for this my-pace person to confirm me first.

"--continue?"
"Yes, the matter on the western part of the continent has ended with the talk earlier, but I have two more information."

Huh? Wasn't this person only in charge with the information from the western part of the continent?

Thinking so, I urge her to continue.

"First, there's an eyewitness who saw demon in the labyrinth of a small kingdom located in the buffer zone of the Saga Empire, Yowok Kingdom.

The explorer guild of that kingdom seems to have squashed the spread of the information, so the story hasn't reached the king and its neighboring countries."

--Oy.

Why do you know information that the king of this kingdom doesn't know.

It seems she has guessed my thought, the female informant grins and laughs, then she continues the talk.

"That is because Retel-sama is good at using money."

I see, someone that Marchioness Retel Ashinen has sent or bought on the site probably saw the demon in person.

"As Viscount-sama might have known, there's a high chance that a demon lord is the floormaster in a labyrinth where demons are infesting. I earnestly implore Viscount-sama not to approach Yowok Kingdom."

I feel that there was some subtle accent on her words.
It seems like she's somehow guessed that Nanashi and me are related.

"Yes, of course."
"Viscount-sama really doesn't show it on his face~"

It's all thanks to Poker Face-sensei.

◇

"And, the other one. This time it's a rumor from the buffer zone between

the Weaselkin Empire on the eastern part of the continent and Shiga Kingdom."

Fumu, this time it's the eastern part huh.
The Marchioness's eyes and ears are too wide.
Her lineage nobility isn't just for show.

"Have the weasels started doing something again?"
"No, they haven't done anything on the scale like when they started using mount-type golems to go to war 10 years ago."

An unexpected information came out.

I wonder if it's like golem tanks or golem horses?
Don't tell me it's a manned mecha robot?

I must go see it at least once.
I write the plan with red text on the sightseeing tour plan.

"Do you know that the Weaselkin Empire destroyed the kingdom of the tigerkin and lizardkin, and enlarged their territory?"
"Yes, I know."
"The survivors of those ruined kingdoms have not only settled in the small kingdoms at the buffer zone, but they've also started to occupy the kingdoms' towns and cities."

Did they take over the buildings lent to them or did they invade them, I wonder which one is it?
I was going to go there first as the sightseeing destination after I've stopped by at the Duchy Capital, but I'll think it over if going there means seeing heaps of bodies.

"So far this isn't something unusual even excepting the『Demon Lord Season』, but invaders in one of those towns massacred the priests who

refused to heal them."

To massacre priests in a world where gods exist, reckless people do exist.

"This also happen often in an occupied territory, but the next day, the great majority of those invaders were turned into salt pillars."

Salt pillars huh.... That's a divine punishment that appeared in the scriptures in my former world.

"A handsome man in white clothing appeared before the townspeople who were fearfully looking at those salt pillars and said, 『This is a divine punishment.』 The townspeople asked who that man was, and--"

The female informant pauses there and sees my reaction.
When I sent her a glance to urge her to continue, the female informant shrugged her shoulders uninterestingly and continued the story.

"--He introduced himself as an apostle of God Zaikuon."

God's apostle huh....
I've heard the name so many times before but the real [God's Apostle] or perhaps an impostor of the [God's Apostle] has finally appeared.

"But well, in all likelihood, he's probably an impostor though."

The female informant let out a sigh and shook her head.

"Do you have any basis for that?"
"Yes, it'd be a different story if it was of the other gods, but someone who calls themselves as the apostle of the God Zaikuon is definitely an impostor."

The female informant stopped talking as if that was already adequate as

an explanation.

"I'm sorry, but I'm not too informed in religious talk. Would you tell me the reason?"
"It's not about religion, but the situation of the gods. 30 years ago, God Zaikuon made the Dragon God angry and was killed. In fact, the priests of Zaikuon temple can't use holy magic, so God Zaikuon shouldn't be revived yet."

I see, so the source of holy magic is the god themselves huh.
By the way they knew about [Made the Dragon God angry] part by asking the oracle miko from other temples to ask the gods about it.

It seems the gods' here can easily revive themselves if they die.

I finally understand how Aze-san could easily say, "There is no problem if you just kill the Dragon God", when I confessed about it to her.
Taking her longevity into consideration, it's probably like, "The god is sleeping after catching a bit of cold."

"If that guy is an impostor, how did he turn the invaders into salt pillars?"

There's no such spell in my repertoire at least.

"There might be a forbidden spell for it, but as long as he's the same level as Shiga 33 Wands, there are many other ways to easily make it happen."

I urge the female informant who declared so to continue.

"It's possible to make salt pillars that look exactly like real people with earth magic to control salt. Then they just need to bury the invaders deep underground and the divine punishment is complete."

Her reasoning is slightly forced, but it's certainly possible.

I'm slightly bothered with the man that call himself [God's Apostle], but he's only avenging the killed priests anyway, so leaving him alone should pose no problem.

I don't know whether the female informant's guess is correct or not, but even if he's the real thing, as long as he doesn't try to hinder my sightseeing tour or do the [Civilization Suppression], I don't intend to have anything to do with him.
If he get rid of demons and demon lords on his own, then that just means the decrease of the world's damage and my work.

◇

Leaving aside the fake apostle, I probably should investigate the demon in the Yowok Kingdom's Labyrinth and the suspicion of the pope being a demon lord.
Once my businesses at the labyrinth city is over, I should go check them out while also making moving points.

Once the Marchioness's banquet is over, I stealthily visit the house of an older acquaintance of mine whom I've made an appointment with.

"Now then, what kind of business for you to visit so late in the night? You had asked for the presence of my wife beforehand so I could roughly guess it, but I'd like to clearly hear it from your mouth."

Irritated with my late night visitation, Baronet Dyukeli said so.
His wife being beside him is as I've requested, but I don't know why Ms. Merian who's in dress is sitting between the couple.

Well, it's a family problem anyway, there's no need to send her away.

"Then, I'll get to the point."

When I said so, Merian gulped.
It's slightly immodest, but it's not an etiquette breach enough for me to point it out.

I take out a wood box from the magic bag beside me and present it to the Baronet Dyukeli.

"Please accept this. Don't forget to appraise it before using it."
"This is? Is this an engagement gift?"

--Ha?

Baronet Dyukeli asked while opening the wooden box.

Strange... I should have written them a letter about the panacea beforehand... Perhaps the loli maid whom I asked to deliver the letter had failed?

No, doubting people is not a good thing to do.

"Dear! Th-this is!"

The baronet's wife point her finger at the panacea bottle inside the wooden box with a feeble voice.
To be exact, she's pointing at the bottle's label written in Shiga language as [Panacea].

It's the medicine to recover the baronet's eldest son's Goblin Sickness.

"Panacea?! How did you get such a valuable thing?"
"I got it from a regular merchant."

Actually I made it myself. I asked the well-informed first-generation Yuika to teach me the recipe, but it was a simple recipe where you just need to dilute elixir with low grade magic potion for a hundredfold. Normally it's impossible to get your hand on the Elixir, so it only appears as a rare drop in labyrinths.

"Sir Pendragon! W-would you be willing to give up this panacea?"

As expected, It'd be too brutal of me if I'm here only to show it off.

"Yes, of course. Please use it to treat your son."
"Thank you Sir Pendragon. I will compensate this even if it takes me dozens of years."

Baronet Dyukeli hugs me over the desk with his bony arms.

I'm glad that they're pleased.
However, dozens of years is too much.

Leaving that aside, I don't intend to ask for money for an item I've prepared on my own accord.

"No, you don't need to pay for it."
"Then, it really is an engagement gift! Then, my daughter--"
"--No, my fiancee is enough with just her highness princess."

It was a bit rude but I quickly interrupted Baronet Dyukeli.

Using the princess as an excuse is too almighty.
Using it too much would really force me to marry her though, so I have to be prudent with it.

"Is that so--. Sir Pendragon has been intimate with my daughter, so I

misunderstood."

The mood feels like a funeral a bit.
Does he really want her daughter to marry a viscount that much?

It looks like Merian wants to be an explorer, so I think he shouldn't carelessly offer her for a marriage, but she looks dejected like her parent.
Perhaps her maiden pride was hurt because of the rejection.

As an apology, I'll give her the leather armor mark 1 which is of the same type as Zena-san's.
That armor is fashionable, and an equipment specialized in defense despite looking like a normal leather armor, so she shouldn't worry about getting injury that would prevent her getting married.

In addition, Baronet Dyukeli insisted to compensate the panacea no matter what, so I decided to borrow his personal connection for a bit.

It's about the connection with the labyrinth city's merchants not the nobles.
Among them, I'd ask him to introduce me to the retired old merchants who like children, I'm thinking of regularly holding an event for them to play and teach the children the way to make building blocks and knitting baskets or the likes in the food distribution square.

Once the children become a bit skillful, they probably won't have to wait for the food distribution with hungry stomaches anymore, and they get the alternative of going into dangerous labyrinth.

The next morning, an invitation for celebrating Baronet Dyukeli's son recovery came.

Unfortunately, it'll be in five days, I won't be present in the Labyrinth City

so I won't be able to participate.
Leaving that aside, it seems there are a lot of nobles' children who are suffering from the goblin sickness, I'll have Echigoya Firm to sell the medicine for a large sum of money.
There's no need to hesitate with people who aren't acquaintances and have a lot of money.

◇

After writing a celebratory letter to Baronet Dyukeli, I went to greet the promised partners yesterday while bringing along Seryuu Earldom's civil official and military personnels.
I had made the necessary arrangement beforehand, so the contract was completed without problem.

I gave equipment that are of the same class as Merian's to the three people of Zena Squad.
Zena-san should now rest easy with this.

When I got back to the mansion, several maids and orphanage children were looking up at the airship without getting tired.

"Do you want to get in it?"
"Viscount-sama!"
"I want to!"
"Get in!"

I'm going to depart this afternoon, so people rushed to that suggestion.

"It's a ship."
"Will it fall?"
"It's okay."

"Line up~"
"Line up properly nodesu."
"Young organisms, follow after me so I command."

Tama and Pochi made the children to line up, and then Nana led them to the airship.
The airship has [Force Web] to prevent people from falling, so there is no problem even if the children hang out on the top deck.

There were a lot of them, so once the airship went around the labyrinth city once in a sightseeing flight, I instructed Nana to change them with the next children, and then I went back to the mansion.

"Master, the children on the list have gathered in the living room."
"Ah, thanks. Have you explained it to them?"
"But of course!"

Bringing along Arisa who replied reliably, I walked toward the living room.
The children inside the living room are wrapped in tensions not unlike job-hunting students.

"You may relax. I think you've heard from Arisa already, I'm thinking of having you study in the childhood school of the royal academy if you wish to. Of course, Pendragon House will provide the tuition and living expenses during your stay. After completing the childhood school, I'm going to ask the ones who continue to the upper school and have good result to assist and become the model for the future children."

In this place, there are three children who have succeeded to learn magic under Arisa and Mia's guidance, and nine children who have learned to read and do basic arithmetic from among the orphanage children and the maids.

As a reward for accomplishing that much in just several months, I suggested them to go study in the Royal Capital.

"Viscount-sama! I want to be a magician like Arisa and Mia-sama! Which is the shortcut, going to the Royal Capital's school or working hard in the labryinth with Pendora brothers?"

The boy who used magic to turn up skirts asked without being affected by the tension in the place.

"If you want to polish your skill in magic in a short amount of time, the shortcut is by going into the labyrinth. However, if you want to be a magician that's on the same level as Arisa and Mia, I think it's better if you properly study the basic in the Royal Academy before going into the labyrinth."

If he wants to be a magician that can only use attack magic like in a game, then he should just raise his level in the labyrinth, but if he wants to use magic that are usable outside battles, it's better for him to study magic structure and the way to read spells.

"Okay! I'll go to the Royal Academy!"
"I will go too."
"Me too!"

Once the boy who turned up skirts powerfully declared, the other children also expressed their will one after another.

They will be going to the Royal Capital by riding a stagecoach in half a month.
The enrollment for the childhood school was during the new year, but it's possible to accept new students as first years if they show results above a certain level.

Moreover, I think the elf-loving headmaster will somehow help if they bring a recommendation letter written by Mia.

After sending the children home, I call Ms. Miteruna and three senior maids among the loli maids.

"Master, have you called for me--"
"It'll be a bit long, so please have a seat."

I offer a seat to Ms. Miteruna.
I succeeded getting Ms. Miteruna who firmly refused to take a seat after saying, "My neck will hurt if I continue to talk like this."

I tell them that I want to dispatch several maids to the Royal Capital's mansion to learn more sophisticated maid technique.

"Of course, I don't want you to misunderstand that I have a problem with Miteruna's teaching. Training children who didn't know anything to become maids in short amount of time is quite an accomplishment."

I followed up like so since Ms. Miteruna's face stiffened.
In fact, it should have been impossible to raise them to this level with just the loli maids' motivation.

However, I've unexpectedly become an upper noble, so I'd like my employees to polish their techniques even more.

"--I understand what Master is saying. I think these three should be able to endure the training in the Royal Capital."
"""Head-maid!"""

The loli maids are looking at Ms. Miteruna with teary eyes.

"Miteruna, you won't go to the Royal Capital?"

"Yes, if Master permits, I'd like to take the role of raising the children that will be sent to the Royal Capital here."

I see, not improving her own skill, but becoming their educator huh.

She's quite the rare talent.
I'll increase her salary for her training role.

"I'm counting on you, Miteruna."
"Yes, I will be doing my utmost to meet Master's expectation."

--Moderately okay.

◇

Thus, after having completed the businesses in the Labyrinth City, we departed to the Duchy Capital where the cooking contest is going to be held.
Under the pretext of cheering for Lulu, the Labyrinth City group are also going to the Duchy Capital, and will be returning to the Labyrinth City through the land route once the cooking contest is over.

In actuality, they're going to go in and out of the labyrinth through the Island Palace as the base, and then I will send them to the vicinity of the Labyrinth City after enough time has passed for the land travel to happen.

"Master won't participate in the cooking contest?"
"I've been chosen as a special judge you see."

Apparently, its name is [Pendragon Cup].
Even [Miracle Chef Cup] would have been better than that.

"Then there's no need to hold back! I'll think of a dish that will tightly grab Master's heart!"
"W-wait Arisa! Don't pull me that hard!"
"Tasting~?"
"Pochi will help with tasting too nodesu!"

Following after Arisa and Lulu, Tama and Pochi also went to Lulu's exclusive kitchen.

"Master, everyone has completed their preparation."
"Master, I want scarlet armor too, so I entreat."

Liza and Nana appeared from the living room having done arming themselves.
After the two, Sera, Zena-san, Lady Karina, and the princess; beauties wrapped in Hihiirokane-made scarlet armor showed up.
This armor has auto-fitting functionality, so I didn't do any attractive size measurement.

"Satou-san, thank you for waiting."
"I-is it alright for me to wear this splendid armor?"
"The pressure on my chest is suffocating desuwa."
"It's like the knight that appears in tales."

After praising the four ladies, "They look really good on you", I send them to the planned rearing site.
It's the power-leveling place where I raised Echigoya Firm's executives' levels to 30.

"I've connected this to the permanent gate, so let them rest in the palace when they fall from the level up intoxication."
"Understood."
"Yes, Master."

After giving instructions to Liza and Nana, I plug my ears from hearing the scream behind, and start the preparation to go out.

Right now, Mia should be enjoying herself playing with the world's largest pipe organ in the concert hall next to the palace.
Giving the children musical instruments to nurture their aesthetic sensitivity might be a good idea.

I choose [Equip: Kuro] magic on the Magic Column and transform to Kuro.
Using this original magic, it doesn't only equip the clothing and mask, but also automatically set every kind of information like my name, occupation, and others in the Exchange column.
It's quite a handy magic for a careless person like me.

Now that I've finished the change, let's check the two demon lords' places!

14-4. Yowok Kingdom

*

Satou's here. Exterminating pest in my grandfather's countryside was already hard enough, but in another world the pest can even rout an army, so normal people can't do anything about them. It's like challenging bears or dinosaurs with farming tools after all.

◇

At first I was hesitating to choose which of the suspicions I would go first, but after contemplating the ease of movement, I decided on it.

In Kuro figure, I went to a branch office of Echigoya Firm at the handy relay point in Kuhanou Earldom.
This place is a temporary building and no one from the executives is here.

"Uwah.... Wait, that white hair, are you Kuro-sama?! Oh please don't surprise me like that."
"Don't mind it."

The branch manager girl who just came into the room where I moved into with Unit Arrangement got surprised.
She's a slave that the Manager bought, but the Manager highly valued her business and negotiation talent and entrusted her to be the branch manager.
It seems she's been promised to be freed of her slave status if she can make this branch office prosper.

There are some people who don't want to be freed like Tifaliza, but most of them want to be released by working, there's some wide difference in their desire.

"What business do you have today? Or maybe, have the report that I sent yesterday arrived already?"

--Report?

"No, I haven't seen it, is it important?"
"No no, it's just that one of the liquor brewing winery is on the verge of collapse."

What, that kind of thing huh.... No, wait.

"Is that the content of the report?"
"Yes, it's of the liquor brand that the Manager regularly stocks, so I'd like to ask whether we should intervene or not."
"Is it the『Blood of Lesseu』?"
"So Kuro-sama is aware of it.... What kind of secret that cheap wine--"

I lightly threatened the probing branch manager girl, "Curiosity killed the cat."
This [Blood of Lesseu] is a wine that the True Ancestor vampire Ban who lives in the lower layer of the labyrinth likes.

Investigating the demon lord is important, but I shouldn't neglect this either.
He's a friend after all, and I'm indebted to him for many things.

"So, is it collapsing because of financial reason?"

If that's the case then Echigoya Firm can just buy them.

"No, the villages where the wine is brewed seem to be in danger of annihilation because of monster outbreak. The territorial army of Earl Lesseu only exterminate monsters in the highways and the mines, so most

rural areas far from the cities are doing terrible."

I checked the map while listening to the branch manager girl.
There's a few monsters along the roads and around the cities where the kingdom army was said to be sweeping, but the rural areas where monsters are wandering about have become danger zones.
The monsters are all level 20 small fries, but expecting the villagers to exterminate them is impossible.

"The village's name?"
"They're Hosbed village and Suibod village."

Checking on the map, ant-type monsters have made a nest on the mountain near Hosbed village, while caterpillar-type monsters seem to have spread around the vicinity of Suibod village.

"Then I'll go exterminate them."
"Eh? Kuro-sama--"

After telling the branch manager girl, I moved to the mountain near Hosbed village with [Teleport] magic.
With this [Teleport] magic I can teleport to anywhere on the map that has been explored, it's extremely handy.
Of course, [Teleport Gate] is the same too, but that one uses too much magic power.

I think [Unit Arrangement] that can only be used in an area that I rule and places that I can see has its use case.

◇

"Damn you ant bastards! Our vineyard that we've put so much!"

"Tagwosa! Stop! You'll only die in vain fighting them with a hoe!"

I could hear such conversations from the wind blowing from the village.
According to the radar, it seems that the vineyard located on the mountain foot is being attacked by ant monsters.

I take out level 30-class magic orbs from Storage and throw them on the ground.

--[Create Stone Wolf].

10 bear sized wolf stone statues are created from the center of the magic cores on the ground.
These stone wolves are a type of golem.

"Eliminate the monsters attacking the village."

After I gave them an order, the stone wolves ran at full speed toward the vineyard.
Eliminating the monsters with Remote Arrows would have better cost/performance ratio, but thinking about the future, I decided to use the stone wolves.

The battle had already ended when I arrived at mountain foot by walking leisurely.
The ant monsters were only around level 10, they were no match against the stone wolves.

The stone wolves, that have assembled silently, put the magic cores they've collected from the ants near my feet.

There are 30 of them in total.
Even though they were small fries, this is too many near a human habitat.

Wouldn't the village get destroyed if I wasn't here?

"A-are you the master of those stone wolves?"
"That's right. The name's Kuro."

I gave the stone wolves the order to raid the ant nest while replying the villagers.
I do it just by designating the place on the map, it's truly easy.

"Magician-sama, where have those stone wolves gone to?"

The village mayor who has good attires that appeared from behind the men asked me politely.

"I let the stone wolves to go destroy the ant nest. I can't hand over these magic cores, but I won't take the materials from those monster bodies, distribute them to the villagers to use."

I point at the ant bodies that the stone wolves have destroyed and leave them to the villagers.
Protective gears made from ant shells have good defense despite being as light as leather armor, so they should be able to sell it at a good price to the arm dealers since the neighboring territory is having a civil war.

I use the magic cores that I've just got for the [Create Stone Wolf] like earlier, creating 30 medium dog-sized stone wolves.
They're inferior compared to the stone wolves from earlier, but they should be stronger than your average soldiers.
It should be enough for the village defense.

I order the stone wolves to protect the vineyard, and to patrol the vicinity and destroy any monster.
Just in case, I grant the village mayor a restricted right to command them.

"I'm giving you these stone wolves to protect the vineyard. Make use of them to exterminate monsters."
"S-such expensive magic servants, is it?"

--Expensive? Considering the magic core price, all of them aren't even one gold coin worth you know?

"Don't mind it. My acquaintance habitually drinks the liquor made from this village's grapes. I did this for that person."
"I-it wasn't an order from Earl Lesseu?"
"I have nothing to do with Earl Lesseu, but he's not small-minded enough to complain about a village being saved from a threat."

No, that restless youngster might loath it if the populace show gratitude to someone besides him.

"However, if Earl Lesseu complains, tell him to direct that to the house of Duke Mitsukuni."
"D-duke house?! I-if I'm not mistaken, it's greater than Earl-sama?"

Ignoring the surprised village mayor, I carve the stone wolves with the crest of Duke Mitsukuni house using magic.

The crest of Duke Mitsukuni house is two intersecting tennis racket. Mito probably picked rackets from the [Teni x Hero] manga from where the name [Yamato] came from.

>Stone Wolf Leaders have accomplished the order. Shifting to stand-by mode.

Log listed that the stone wolves have completed their mission.
This is quite convenient.

"Well then, good bye."

I expressly used [Fly] magic by chanting, went to the ant nest through the sky where the stone wolves were waiting, and collected the bodies and the magic cores.

When I was entering the cave, I invoked [Astro Suit] magic that I once used in the void sky, avoiding the stench. <TLN: TL mistake on Ch. 13 Intermission 1, should've been "Astro Suit" there.>
This magic has very good usability.

Using the magic cores I got here, I saved the second village and got a lot more magic cores.
Of course I also left the deployed stone wolves to protect the second village like the first, so the vineyards should be peaceful from now on.

◇

I slightly digressed, but since there's still some time before noon, I head toward Yowok Kingdom through the air lane.

I inadvertently got near the battlefield when I was passing through Bisthal Dukedom along the way and got chased by the Wyvern Riders.
I immediately lost them once I changed from [Fly] to Flash Drive, but I'll have to be careful in choosing my flight course next time.

Just in case, I searched Bisthal Dukedom, but there wasn't any demon nor Unique Skill user there.
There were unusually many Tamers and Beast Riders but, I couldn't find a particularly suspicious point, so it's probably a territory that offer those kinds of jobs.

There was a huge lake, five times the size of Lake Biwa near the duchy

capital, I'd like to go visit there with everyone once the war is over.

And then, I finally arrived at the group of small kingdoms after crossing the border mountain range.

I made a slight error, as I didn't arrive at Yowok Kingdom but at a town of a mountain kingdom called Zareok Kingdom.
According to the Tourism Ministry's document, it seems to be an idyllic kingdom that specializes in wool products.

"Fumu, the specialty products here are the lamb steak and the sheep milk liquor huh...."

According to the prime minister's gourmet guidance, the lamb steak is superb, and once you get used to the quirky sheep milk liquor, you just can't stop.
I was slightly tempted to pick them up, but let's enjoy that for later.

For the re-visit purpose, I built a house in a desolate place deep in the mountain using [Create Safe House] magic.
It's an original magic created by remodeling the [Create House] magic from before.

The inside is a normal house, but it looks like a dilapidated house covered in ivy on the outside.
Moreover, it's hidden into the surrounding once you get slightly away from it, so unless you have something like my map, or are very lucky, finding this [Retreat] should be difficult.

Leaving behind the tempting memories of Zareok kingdom, I head toward the neighboring kingdom.

For some reason, there are areas that are ruled by monsters in the border or rather the gap between kingdoms.

Apparently, when a strong monster above certain level continues to rule the Source, the area becomes its dominion.
It's like a grand-strategy simulation game.

Passing through such monster domains, I enter the next kingdom.

According to the Tourism Ministry map, this is the Garuok Kingdom where a lot of woodworks and coals exist.
It seems that the furnitures made by master craftsmen of this kingdom are famous even in Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire.

"Furnitures huh--Touring the workshops of European-style antique furnitures sounds fun."

According to the document, this Garuok Kingdom has symbiotic relationship with the neighboring Deerfolk kin and Squirrelfolk kin.
Deerfolk kin offer military force to Garuok Kingdom, and get food supply as the compensation.
Looking at the map, it seems there's a lot of Squirrelfolk kin working away from home as furniture craftsmen.

There are monster-ruled domains between Garuok Kingdom and my destination Yowok Kingdom too.
This one seems to be a wyvern domain.

The wyverns that circle the sky near the mountaintop found me and raised vigilant cries.

A wyvern as big as a lesser dragon takes along several wyverns with it to ride the updraft air current heading toward me.
Its full of impact looks like one scene in a movie.

"Wyverns are bad news aren't they..."

I quickly exterminate them with [Laser] magic while leaving only a pair of young wyverns.
The reason why I didn't eliminate them all is because the monster domains might be helping in restraining war.

I was interested with the white peak near the wyvern nest, so I went to see it while also collecting the bodies in the air.

"--All of these white things are dragon white stone huh."

Apparently, dragon white stones are something created from wyvern's dungs that have undergone change.
It's interesting that the material that comes from wyverns that carry deadly poison is also an ingredient of the all-purpose antidote.

I use earth magic to roughly cut the dragon white stone and collect them into Storage.
With this many, it could last 1000 years for the labyrinth city use.

◇

After finally arriving at Yowok Kingdom, I use [All Map Exploration].
Since this Yowok Kingdom has absorbed Arisa's homeland, it's larger than small kingdoms I've been to so far, there are two cities and seven towns.
There's hardly any demi-human even as slaves, it seems to be a kingdom that's mainly of humans.

Just like the maps I've been through so far, let alone demon lord, there's not even any demon nor anyone with Unique Skill.
Of course, there's no one with possessed condition nor demon lord sympathizer either.

The eyewitness said that he saw the demon in the labyrinth after all, judging it as a false report is too early.

I built a [Retreat] in a mountain for emergency use.
I've already built some in the neighboring kingdoms and the wyvern domain, but just in case.

While under [Optical Camouflage] skill, I head toward the ruin of Kubooku Kingdom's royal castle where the Yowok Kingdom's labyrinth is.

"This is terrible...."

The main part of the royal castle has disappeared, and three towers next to the castle wall have collapsed.
The only tower remaining is destroyed on its base too and there's no one inside.

According to Arisa, it was a greater demon's attack, so the damage might be little considering.
Lesseu City was virtually destroyed by a mid demon after all.

Now then, there are a few presences of human in this ruined castle site.

According to the map info, those people have [Adventurer] occupation.
To be exact, they seem to be [Adventurers] that belong to [Yowok Kingdom Labyrinth Bureau Adventurer Guild].

It seems they're managing people who go in and out of the royal castle, or rather the labyrinth through the [Adventurer Guild] building located in one section of the castle site.
Observing them, I see that the staff members are checking the adventurer's badge in the labyrinth entrance.

I can enter the labyrinth if I just use [Optical Camouflage] and [Magic Essence Camouflage], but since it seems that the adventurer's badge is issued on the same day just like at the labyrinth city Selbira, I decide to go through the normal route.
I land in a shade near the ruined castle and release [Optical Camouflage] skill.

"Hey hey, onii-san over there, won't you play with Kuku?"

A little girl of middle school age tried to pick me up when I went out of the shade.
The power of foreigner celebrity's face is amazing. Handsome men go explode--it's at the level where you want to say that.

Just like what Arisa has said, the language of this kingdom feels like Shiga Kingdom's dialect.

"How about it? Just one small silver coin you see?"

Apparently, she's not picking me up, but selling herself.

I don't have this kingdom's currency, but Saga Empire's and Shiga Kingdom's one should be usable.
It's not like I can't pay, but the girl is a bit too young to sell herself.

"Sorry, but I have no interest in little girl."

When I was about to leave after telling her so, two bad-looking boys appeared from the opposite street.

"Ooh! Ya want to go for free after putting yer hands on our Kuku?"
"Hehhee, I'll let ya off with yer life if ya leave all yer money alright?"

They came out a bit too fast, but it seems these guys are playing the

badger game.

"In other words, I can go if I beat you guys up?"
"Hmph! Ya think ya can win against this Jido Bado brothers--"

Since the two boys affirmed my question, I lightly kick them away.
They sunk into a deserted house's wall, but since the little girl called Kuku went to them, leaving them should be fine.

◇

"Registration is it? Then please put your hand on this judgment board and say your name."

When I asked the beautiful Adventurer Guild receptionist, I was made to touch a Yamato Stone they call judgment board.
I thought of using Kuro's level, but it seemed like level 50 would make them be on guard, so I lowered the level to 20 before touching the Yamato Stone.
I'd look unnatural if I was empty handed like usual, so I'm currently equipped with an iron short sword on my waist.

"Is this alright?"
"My! Level 20, you're amazing! Moreover, not only you have one-hand sword skill, you also have also magic skill!"

The receptionist said that in a loud voice at the same time my levels and skills appeared on the Yamato Stone.

--What about your duty of confidentiality.

"Oy."

"Aah, I'm sorry! Oh me."

Judging from the receptionist who doesn't look like she's sorry, rather than being careless, it seems that she did it deliberately to inform the spies of Yowok Kingdom in this place.
Even after taking the adventurer badge and leaving the guild, those spies didn't make any movement, so it seems that I'm off the hook from their vigilance.

I show the adventurer badge written with F at the labyrinth's entrance.

It seems that the adventurer's badge uses A-F alphabet due to the influence of the first generation Saga Empire's hero.
Apparently it's the tradition to use the "Alphabet" rank that he used in the first Adventurer Guild of Saga Empire he built.

"Hmph, F rank huh. Stop at the goblin in the first floor. Goblin mages and goblin riders appear from the fifth floor. Don't approach them ever, you'll die y'know?"
"Thank you for the advice."

The gatekeeper with arrogant tone offered a kind advice.
After thanking the gatekeeper, I set foot into the labyrinth.

Dark. It seems that the floor isn't emitting dim light here unlike the labyrinths in Selbira and Seryuu cities.
It feels like the ruined labyrinth in the Duchy Capital instead.

The labyrinth's name is [Goblin Labyrinth: Ruin] after all.
According to Arisa, it seems to be a labyrinth that once lost its Dungeon Core and got revived, there are probably many functions that haven't been restored yet.

After walking for a bit, I obtained the labyrinth's information with [All

Map Exploration].
It seems there are around 51 floors. Each floor is about three times as big as the narrow Seryuu City's [Demon Labyrinth]'s.

--Found it.

There's a demon lord in the lowest floor as the [Dungeon Master].

Now then, let's get it done quick!
The lunch that Lulu especially made would get cold if I don't clean this up quick after all.

14-5. Yowok Kingdom (2)

*

Satou's here. Meeting relatives during homecoming after a long while is fun. However, according to my childhood friend, it was the penance time for marriage bashing, she grumbled.

◇

I investigate the detailed information of the demon lord that I found in the [Goblin Labyrinth] under Yowok Kingdom's royal castle.

Besides the [Demon Lord] title, the demon lord has some other strange titles, such as [Gambling Addict], [Debt King], [Good-for-Nothing Father].
His race is [Great Oni Kin (Ogre)], level 55 and only one Unique Skill, [All-or-Nothing].
I've heard that having only one Unique Skill rarely turns one into a demon lord, so he probably had two initially, one which was given to Shin boy, [Master Wizard].

Liza alone might be able to defeat him right now.

In addition, I don't see any greater demon and there's only one mid demon on stand-by near the demon lord.
There are lesser demons situated in labyrinth management rooms located in floor 10 to 30, with each room having one demon. It's like a masterpiece dungeon game from years ago.

This labyrinth is mostly occupied by demi-goblins and rat-type monsters, there are also demi ogres, first time I've seen the type, prowling in the deeper floors.

Looking at it from an explorer's point of view, this is an extremely unprofitable labyrinth. You can only get money from magic cores and hides from the rat-type monsters.
Perhaps it's because of that the adventurers in this labyrinth generally have low levels.

Most are less than level 30, and the only ones higher than that is the party that have gotten to floor 48.
It seems that other parties besides that one are only on par with up-to level 20 enemies in floor 29. The reason is probably the level 40 Demi Ogre Rift mid boss in floor 30.

"There he is!"
"Are we really going to kill him?"
"Of course! He almost killed us y'know?"

I heard familiar voices of boys and girl from behind.
Apparently, they've resentfully chased after me.

It's probably the effect of the girl's [Pursuit] skill.
They could just have become guards.

A strong-sounding monster, Demi Goblin Berserker, is approaching from the front, but it's only one monster and its level isn't that different from their levels. They should be able to do something about it if they're really adventurers.

I teleported to floor 48 where the farthest adventurer party is before both sides could get to me.
I want to recommend them to evacuate since there's a possibility they get swallowed up in my battle with the demon lord.

The party's leader is a level 53 magic warrior with [Hero's Attendant] as the title. I didn't know that there was such an old woman among Hayato's

companions who are all young beauties.
Her companions are one level 36 holy knight, six heavy knights, two magicians, two priests, one scout and four baggage carriers. Leaving out the baggage carriers ,the average level is 31, quite high.

Looks like the top rankers are reasonably high leveled even though it's a labyrinth of a small kingdom.

They'd be surprised if I suddenly teleported in front of them, so I went to the room two rooms away from them.
The reason why I didn't go to the adjacent room is because the slave baggage carriers are there.

"Monster?!"
"Did it break through master's monster barrier?!"

The moment I stepped into the room where the slaves were, I got attacked with small fireballs as though I was a monster.
Looks like they have fire wands for self-defense.

I ignore the fireballs, move before the slaves with Ground Shrink, and take the dangerous toys away from them.

"Calm down. I am a human."

Hearing me, the slaves promptly jumped back and took the short spears leaning on the mountain of baggage.
Since their levels are more than 20 and they have spear and life magic skill, they're probably reasonably confident with their skills.

I can beat them up first before talking to them, but I'd feel guilty like I'm taking their spoils in the labyrinth.

"Show us your adventurer badge."

"Here."

I followed their demand and threw them the adventurer badge I just made.

"F rank adventurer?!"
"Tsk, a fake adventurer badge huh!"

Looks like they've become needlessly more wary even though I followed their demand.

--Oh?

The luminous point of a heavy knight in the next room has disappeared. There were only one Demi Ogre Lord and two Demi Ogre Guards in the room they were in before but now 30 Demi Ogre Executioners have appeared before I knew it.

It's probably the demon lord's doing as the [Dungeon Master], but he's too eager to kill them.

"Sorry, but there's no more time to play around."

While saying that to the slaves, I neutralize them with the inter-personal suppression magic, [Sound Pressure].

I instantaneously move to the locked door that connects to the next room, and forcefully kick it.
It was a bit rough, but using unlocking magic would be too slow, so there was no helping it.

◇

"Zana, withdraw while protecting Jeff's back!"
"Understood!"
"Blum-baasan too, quick!"
"Who's a baasan!"
<TLN: Baasan means old woman.>

They're still struggling hard even while being surrounded by three-meter tall demi ogres wielding pitch black axes. Unfortunately, another one of the luminous points disappeared.

The old female magic warrior called Blum aims for the demi ogres legs' tendon to slow down their pursuit using a greatsword with blue blade.
I thought it was a holy sword for an instant, but since it's emitting red light, it's probably a kind of magic sword.

"Torin and Silje, fight with me against these axe monkeys."
"You serious."
"I got the short end of the stick."
"I'll give you one bag of gold coins for every ogre you defeated, get on to it!"

Now then, I'm sorry for them who have gotten fired up, but I'll clean this up quick.

I mark the positions of the demi ogres on the map.
Invoke intermediate earth magic [Iron Toss].
Telephone pole-sized iron cones appear from below the demi ogres, skewering them one after another.

Hoarse screams of the demi ogres are echoing in the hall, but it doesn't look like I'm getting any language skill.

"Wha, magic?!"

Looking at the screaming demi ogres that raised cloud of dust and the iron cones beyond the dust, Ms. Blum turned to look behind while voicing her surprise.
Yet none stops their feet moving toward here, probably to get themselves away from the carnage.

The screams disappear before long, I see skewered bodies behind the cloud of dust.

....Gross.
It's not a scene I really want to see, so I extend my [Magic Hand] and collect their bodies along with the iron cones into the Storage.

I left the bodies of demi ogre guards that they've defeated and demi ogre lord that should have been defeated alone.

"Did you defeat them?"
"That's right. It might have been an unnecessary meddling, but I have some business here you see."
"No, you really saved us."

Ms. Blum Julberg talks like a man, but she's quite a beauty.
She's more than 88 years old, I'd have loved to meet her 60 years ago.

According to the map info, it seems she's the mother of Zeff Julberg, the chief of Shiga Eight Swords.

"Are you the new apostle or the new hero of Saga Empire?"
"No. I have a question too, are you not the attendant of Hero Hayato?"
"Hahn? Me, that brat Hayato's attendant? What a joke."

Apparently, I've guessed wrongly.

"I'm an attendant of the previous hero."

By previous, that means the one who fought the demon lord 66 years ago. Still being in active duty when she's nearing her 90, that's amazing.

"Hou, one of the heroes who exterminated the demon lord huh--are the others still active too?"
"No way. The only ones alive are the saintess Riri and the elf Sea. Riri has grown old that she rarely goes out of the holy sanctuary, Sea is fine but she's retired now and should be working to earn her keep. That girl never liked fighting after all."

By Sea I wonder if it's Sebelkea of the labyrinth city?
The head miko of Tenion temple said that she was an attendant of the previous hero, so the saintess Riri must be her. She probably got the name, [Yu Tenion] when she became the head miko.

When I was considering such a thing, one of her companion reservedly called her.

"Blum-baasan, Kiru and Gotz couldn't make it."
"I see.... Those two were excellent shield users."

The young male scout who checked their death companions reported with a grim face.

"There's no way we can challenge the『Dungeon Master』without any shield user."
"Right, even if Blum-baasan is strong--"

Two spear users made timid remarks, but I think their levels aren't enough to challenge the [Dungeon Master] even if they're at full party.

Before all that, the opponent is not a common [Dungeon Master] but a demon lord though.

"Zana, use the『Teleport』scroll and take everyone back."

After contemplating, Ms. Blum ordered one of the knights.
Looks like they're preparing to escape from the labyrinth.

"What's Blum-baasan going to do?"
"I'll go see the『Dungeon Master』with this white-haired nii-san."
"Don't be absurd, Blum-baasan. You can't win with two people no matter how powerful of a magician that person is."

Somehow they're continuing the conversation without me.

"Wait, I do not intend to take you along."
"I'm useful you know? My swordsmanship is as good as a Shiga Eight Swords, and my lightning magic won't lose to the old man Lightning from Seryuu Earldom. In addition, I can even use holy magic up to intermediate level."

Does a level 50s have that many skills?

....It might be possible with blessing orbs or gifts.

"That's amazing, but you're just a drag."
"You want to see my skill?"

She's quite quick to snap.

"Why do you want to see the『Dungeon Master』that much?"
"In order to ascertain whether this labyrinth's master is a demon lord or not--"
"What are you going to do once you're certain?"
"Isn't it obvious. I'll send that information to the current generation Hero."

I see, she's not someone suicidal who wants to seek her place of death by fighting the demon lord.
Looking at her level, it should be quite a close battle, but since demon lords use unreasonable cheating techniques, you can't fight them unless you have a certain leeway.
However, she did arrive here, right before the battle site after all, she has the qualification to at least see the demon lord.

"Very well. I will take only you."
"Thank you. I'm Blum Julberg. I'll thank you plenty once we get back on the ground."

Once it was settled, her companions teleported away one after another, leaving most of their baggage.
Due to the limit of the scroll, they didn't teleport to the ground, but to the safe area in floor 29.

◇

"Now then, let's--what're you doing?"
"This is a scarecrow for scouting a bit."

Blum-baasan who came back from taking some baggage outside the hall tilted her head in puzzlement looking at a full body armor in front of me.
This armor is a spare from the time when I was making bronze golems.

I use this with [Create Golem] magic to turn it into a golem.
In addition, I put a disguise mask and a casted holy sword on it, complete.

I'm thinking of teleporting this to the Dungeon Master Room where the demon lord is with the space magic [Teleport an Object] to check the

demon lord's Unique Skill.
It might be too cautious against a level 50 demon lord, but his Unique Skill's name [All-or-Nothing] sounds ominous, so this is just an insurance.

"■■■■■■■ .... ■■ Teleport an Object"

Once my long chanting is over, the scout golem disappared from the room.
Next, I use [Clairvoyance] and [Clairhearing] magic chantlessly to share the scout golem's sight and hearing.

There I see--.

◇

"--Uwaaaaaaaa. G-go away! You damn hero! I-I'm--AAAAAAAAAH!"

I can hear the demon lord who sounds like he's gone mad through the magic.
I saw a Japanese-style ogre (oni) with violet-colored body hair shrinking away as if he was afraid of the bronze scarecrow. The demon lord's eyes are fixated on the casted holy sword.

The demon lord's body is wrapped in violet light--.

Afterward, light covers my view through the Clairvoyance, and a bursting-like explosion can be heard through the Clairhearing.

"W-what? This sound and vibration--looks like there's really a demon lord here."

Ms. Blum shows a fearless smile and then she begins to put support

magic on herself and me.

However, that was a pointless action.
I look at the sentence that appeared on my log.

>Title [Demon Lord Slayer『Great Oni King』] Acquired.

Apparently the demon lord has blown himself.
Since I saw a violet light through Clairvoyance, I hurriedly jumped to the Dungeon Master Room with [Teleport] magic chantlessly.

『Tat' old fart dun' and blew 'imself. Ya can't win if ya ble』

I cut the [God's Fragment], who was floating away toward the roof while grumbling, with the Divine Sword.
After confirming that the violet light has been absorbed into the Divine Sword, I put the sword back to the Storage.

The mid demon that was in this room seems to have been killed in the demon lord's explosion, a broken dark red magic core is lying on the corner of the room.

Two huge spheres are lying on one part of the room.
According to AR reading, they're a [Fake Core] and a [Doom Core].
Since the Fake Core is scattering sparks like it's going to explode and the Doom Core begins to spill black mist that looks cursed, I quickly stow them away into my Storage.

If I'm not mistaken according to Arisa a [Dungeon Core] should be in the room of the [Dungeon Master], but it doesn't seem to be here.

Right when I put the [Doom Core] into the storage, red luminous points lit up in the next room.
According to the map, they're a [King Mummy] and several [Mummies].

Even though it's a King Mummy, it doesn't seem to be related with Corpse who's living in Selbira labyrinth's lower layer.

....Arisa's family huh.

I set foot into the next room.

UOWOOONUWOOOORWEYEEEEE !
<TLN: Written in latin on the raw, it sounds like "damn you" in Japanese.>

The mummies are approaching me while letting out voices of resentment.

Unfortunately, conversation doesn't seem to be possible even though he's a King Mummy like Corpse is.
I thought of cremating them with fire magic [Fire Storm], but I should ask Sera to purify them with advanced magic.

After reporting to Ms. Blum and taking her to the Dungeon Master Room through the normal route, she believed me just like that.
She was surprised to see me using magic chantlessly, but she was convinced that I'm a reincarnated person by her own volition.

I sent her back to her companions now that she had completed her objective, and then I went away to handle the remaining business.

Now that I've defeated the demon lord who was the [Dungeon Master], it seems I've become the ruler of this labyrinth, and I can move here with Unit Arrangement.
Taking advantage of this, I eliminated the remaining lesser demons and collected the documents written in [Devil Language] that were in their rooms.

Using Unit Arrangement, I move to Selbira's labyrinth where Sera and the others are.

"Satou-san!"

Sera who's noticed me gracefully steps toward me.
The princess and Lady Karina are sitting on simple chairs being exhausted from level up intoxication, while Zena-san is looking after them.

"Master, we have completed the quota of this room."
"Master, hoping for supply through magic power circulation."

Liza who burned the hiding cockroaches with magic edge cannon and Nana who smashed them with shotgun-type acceleration gun reported back.

"Thank you for your work. Let's have a lunch."

After telling that, I take everyone back to the solitary island palace.
I canceled the permanent teleport gate.

Without telling what happened in the morning, we all enjoyed a delightful lunch.

"Arisa, Lulu, and also Sera-san, can I have your time for a bit."
"This is quite rare of Master."

I show the adventurer badge to Arisa who looks curious.

"T-this is an adventurer badge! I want one too! Hey hey, where--"

Her expression froze when she saw the branded mark [Yowok Kingdom Labyrinth Bureau Adventurer Guild] behind the badge.

"So you went there. To that labyrinth..."
"Yeah, and I have something to talk about that--"

I tell her about the mummies.

"So I'd like to ask Sera-san to purify them."
"Yes, please leave it to me."

Sera who guessed the mood purposefully said it in a bright tone.

"Arisa and Lulu, what do you want to do? I'll take you along if you want to see them, but if it's hard for you, you can just visit the graves once it's all over."
"Un, I'm going. It's the duty of the living to mourn the dead."
"I'm going too. I had only ever talked with the king a few times, but he's still Arisa's and my father."

Arisa clearly asserted her wish to go with us after wiping her tears with her arm.
Lulu who comforted Arisa nodded while supporting her.

"Then, let's go."

I take the three to the labyrinth's underground with Unit Arrangement.

"Hey, Sera-sama. Could you please recite the『Requiem』spell once?"
"Why? I have to use a lot of magic power for 『Requiem』, so I won't be able to use it until tomorrow if I use it even once you know?"

Sera frowned to Arisa's sudden question.

"I'm asking you too."
"I cannot refuse if it's Satou-san's request."

I somehow understood what Arisa wanted to do, so I asked for her too.
Even if it doesn't turn out as Arisa wishes, I can just supply magic power and ask Sera once again.

Sera ends her requiem-like long spell.

"--Un, I've memorized it."

Arisa sheepishly muttered.

"Then, let's go."

I hold Arisa's shoulders and go to the room where the mummies are waiting.

"It's been a while Father. --Not like I've ever called you that. However, I want to call you 'father', not 'your majesty', in the end. Onii-chans too, forgive me for being late."

I hold back the mummies with the advanced force magic [Magic Arm].
I drain magic power of the mummies who are going to use magic sometimes, and destroy the attack magic that have been successfully invoked with Break Magic.

"It's fine today right?"
"Yeah."

After finishing her farewell, Arisa looked up at me to check.
When I consented, Arisa muttered "Thank you".

Two violet light ripples ran on Arisa's body.

It's probably the Unique Skills [Never Give Up] and [Over Boost].

I also choose some support magic like [Magic Boost] and [Magic Quality Up] from my Magic Column, and use them on Arisa.

"....■■ Requiem"

The room is basked in blue light once Arisa finishes the long spell.
The mummies stop moving and begin to fall apart, turning into golden sands.

I somehow see smiles on the mummy faces.

"--Arisa"
"Ah, father, mother.... Onii-chans too..."

Figures of the king, the queen and the princes that resemble Arisa can be seen overlapping the crumbling golden sands.
A kind-looking and a cheeky-looking princes wave their hands toward Arisa and then disappear.

I couldn't hear them, but I understand that they were saying that they love Arisa.
Thet king patted Arisa's head with his transparent hand, and then extended that hand toward Lulu.

"--Your Majesty?"

The king's soul showed a slightly lonely expression hearing Lulu, but he gently patted Lulu's head.

"Lulu, say Father."
"Y-yes. Father.... It feels strange somehow. Father, I and Arisa are living happily, so--"
"That's right! We're lovey-dovey with our beloved person everyday, so wait in heaven in peace!"

Joining Lulu, Arisa put up a bravado without even wiping her flooding tears.
The bodies of the two people are becoming more transparent while looking relieved.
Before they disappear, the king made a tapping gesture on my shoulder.

As their current guardian, I nodded to the king, and then the king and the queen disappeared while looking content.

"I wonder if they get to rest in peace?"
"Un, I'm sure that they're in peace. Mother is also waiting over there, so they must be alright."

Lulu nodded to Arisa's words.
Come to think of it, they told me that Lulu's mother, Lili died protecting them when the castle was attacked.

◇

Arisa wanted to stop by, so we teleported to the public cemetery where Lulu's mother is resting with [Unit Arrangement] by seeing it through the retreat.
After praying and offering a bundle of flowers on the public cemetery where Lulu's mother is resting, we moved to one of the ruined windowed tower of Kubooku castle.
Apparently, Arisa was living in that tower during her imprisonment.

"Then I'll go to the tower, you can stroll the town. I'll contact you with『Telephone』magic once I'm done."
"Should I help you carry them?"
"You can't. The tower is full of a maiden's secret."

Arisa disappeared into the tower with a bravado smile.
Her teleport destination is probably the tower's window.

I'm interested in what is left in the tower when she's down like that, but since she doesn't want to show me, I'll let her do what she wants.

"Now then, why don't we take a stroll in the town around the castle while waiting for Arisa?"
"Yes, allow me to guide."

Lulu begins to walk while leading my hand.
Sera who's grasping my other hand asks me with a low voice.

"Satou-san, is it alright for us who should be moving in the airship to show ourselves in front of people?"
"Don't worry about it."

I casually reply and pass recognition inhibition veils to Sera and Lulu.
I'm wearing a recognition inhibition bandana as Satou myself. Sera doesn't like to go with me when I'm Kuro.

"Master, this is baked soba."
"It looks like galette doesn't it."

It's a dish where soba flour is baked and then added with finely chopped pickles.
I don't think it's that tasty, but since Lulu is eating it while looking nostalgic, let's not fuss over minor details.

It doesn't seem to suit Sera's palate, her face looks complicated, so I give her leftover to a little girl who's looking at it enviously.

When I look closer, there's a lot of dirty children here.

Come to think of it, this is the capital of a defeated country huh.

I ask Lulu to guide us to the nearby temple.

"Like I said! We'll donate the pay later!"
"You can't. All adventurers are people who shirk payment, so we won't heal without an advance payment."

The badger game girl who chased me to the labyrinth is disputing with a priestess in front of the temple.
The bleeding boys who are with her looks like they don't have the willpower to participate in the dispute, they're just limping on the ground.

Looking at the AR reading, their life doesn't seem to be in danger.

"....Kuku, Jido, Bado."

Lulu muttered beside me.
I thought she knows them and was surprised when I saw the girl's detailed information. Looks like she's the little sister of Lulu's male cousins.

Since Lulu's face looks pale behind the veil, I judge that they don't have a good relationship, so I pass through them and go to the receptionist for donation.

"Oh my, to give this much donation!"

The priestess whose cheeks are loosened grips my hands and cries tears of joy.
I feel ashamed seeing her to be that happy receiving several gold coins.
I'm planning to donate to other temples and orphanages, so I only give a few in each places.

"O pious people, may the god bless you! ■■■ Bless"

The priestess gave blessing to me and Lulu while shedding tears.
Sera didn't come with us due to religious reason.

>[Holy Magic: Garleon Belief] Skill Acquired.

I got a new skill thanks to the priestess's bless.
I have no plan to use it, so the point assignment is for later.

"Wait! The rich guy over there! Give some to us too!"

When we went out of the temple, the girl called Kuku who was disputing with the priestess in the entrance grasped Lulu's shoulder. Her finger caught Lulu's veil, removing it.

"--Ah"
"Eh? Lulu?"

The two look at each other.
However, that didn't lead to a conversation.

Boom, Kuku was thrown to the ground.
Lulu whose shoulder was caught threw Kuku away with the support from her [Self-Defense] skill.

I retrieve Lulu's veil from the fainted girl and put it on Lulu.

"U-um! Any injury? Are you injured anywhere?"
"No, this girl excels in martial art you see."

The priestess from the donation desk rushed out and asked if we are injured.
She did not take any notice to the fainted Kuku and the fallen boys below.

I bid farewell with a smile and toured the town while donating.
Along the way, we heard a thunderous roar from the direction of the castle, but I could somehow guess the reason, so we continued without minding it.

『Thank you for waiting~ I've done the clean-up.』
"The roaring sound earlier was really Arisa huh?"
『Ehehe~ Cleaning up my black history was too much work, so I erased them all together with the tower with [Disintegrate]』
"No one got injured right?"
『But of course. Arisa-chan never make a blunder.』

After receiving Arisa's report, we continued the tour with four people and then we went back to the solitary island.

"It's home sweet home."
"Oh Arisa. We've only stayed here once."

Lulu retorted to Arisa's cliched words.
They looked like their usual selves, but they somehow seemed like they were forcing themselves, so I lent my chest for the two to sleep on today.

"Arisa--"
"Zzz zzz"

I catch the head of Arisa who's trying to slip into my shirt.

"--I won't sleep with you if you're going to sexually harass me."
"Non nein."

Apparently, Arisa is tougher than I thought.
After lightly whacking Arisa's head, I strongly hug her to sleep so that she won't harass me.

During midnight, Arisa and Lulu sleep talked while shedding tears.
I use mind magic's [Good Night] on them and then wipe their tears with my finger.

I send [Don't worry] hand signal to Tama and Pochi who looked really worried.
The two nodded and then sent [Understood] signal.

Judging from the futon movement, the other girls seem to be worried too.
I'll be investigating the demon lord in the Holy Kingdom Parion tomorrow, I should get some sleep soon.

I'd like to go to Holy Kingdom Parion without any trouble.

14-6. Holy State Parion [Revised]

*

Satou's here. Crisis comes when I've forgotten about it. Things like finding myself not being able to answer the last question of a test that should have been easy, it was quite unnerving.

◇

Arisa wasn't there when I woke up in the morning.
Lulu who should have been sleeping beside me is also missing.

"Ah! Master, you woke up?! And I was just going to give you a wake-up kiss!"

Arisa showed up wearing an apron on the entrance.
She looks more cheerful than usual.

"Nice smell~?"
"Smells sweet nanodesu."
"Hot cake."

The youth troupe raise their bodies on the bed.

"Ehehe~ I made hot cakes today with Lulu's help!"
"Good job~?"
"Arisa is amazing nodesu!"
"Nn, respectable."
"Now, wash your faces. Let's have a breakfast."

Arisa urged everyone to get off the bed with a theatrical tone.

"Nana, you should get up."
"Master, another five minutes."

I shook the shoulders of Nana who was still sleeping even then.
She hugged my arm to her breast while saying another five minutes.

She was clinging to Mia just awhile ago, she probably missed her body warmth.

"Guilty."

The sullen Mia quickly snatched away my happiness.
Mia mercilessly shakes Nana to wake her up and then pulls her arm toward the washroom.
Liza did a morning practice so she looks like usual.

I fix my appearance with the personal grooming advanced magic and report the yesterday's detail to my connections.
I had conveyed "A demon lord got destroyed" to Echigoya Firm and the royal castle when I defeated the demon lord, but I didn't touch the detail.

I connected the king, the prime minister, Echigoya Firm, and me with Telephone.
The sound mode is of Nanashi. Since I previously changed my tone to sound arrogant like Kuro, I have to be careful not to mix them up.

"--Thus, the demon lord who was also the dungeon master of Yowok Kingdom labyrinth had blown himself. There were something called 『Fake Core』 and 『Doom Core』 inside the labyrinth."
『I can understand the Fake Core, but what kind of thing is Doom Core?』
<TLN: TL Mistake last chapter, 'Dummy Core' should have been 'Doom Core'.>

The prime minister asked.
I answer while reading the document I've confiscated from the lesser demon on the menu.

"Doom Core is an apparatus that can effectively produces monsters by gathering curses and grudges."

I convey the information written in the demon document.

"It seems that it had collected grudges from the former royal family before it was installed in the labyrinth. This might be groundless, but perhaps the royal capital was left in poor state in order to collect negative emotions from the surface."

In addition, it seems the Fake Core was used to cultivate Gabo fruits which were needed to breed demi goblins.
The demon document also details about the re-installation of traps inside the labyrinth, "Demi Goblin Trappers work independently."

It seems the demi goblins and the rats in that labyrinth were not all produced by the labyrinth, but some were brought in from outside.
Although it's not written in the demon document, it seems the demi ogres in the lowest floor were brought in from outside too.

From now on, Yowok Kingdom's labyrinth is most likely going to gradually decline, and will eventually wither.

I tell them my plan today once that matter is over.

"--I'm thinking of investigating Holy State Parion today."
『Then we will the necessary documents for the investigation.』
"Thanks. I'll stop by and take it later."

The prime minister said these when I was going to cut the talk after finishing the report.

『Nevertheless, it's such a pitiful end for the great demon lord who

plunged the Royal Capital into chaos and created a new demon lord. As expected, there should not be multiple demon lords hidden in one country, the ploy must have been planned by the senior greater demon.』

Those words stay in mind like a thorn.

Certainly, it's quite unlikely for two demon lords to be in the same country, but if they search a reincarnated person that fits the requirement, and forcefully make them use too much Unique Skill after giving them the intended title--.

It's not impossible.

--However, that's a bit of a stretch.

I laugh away my mind that was on the verge of becoming a conspiracy theorist, and then went to the dining room with Arisa who had came back to call me for the breakfast.

"So? So? How is the taste?"

Arisa peered to my face while looking worried.

The bottom is charred black, and I can see semi-liquid dough when I cut it with a knife.
I can stealthily use heating magic here, but I'll appreciate Arisa's hard work here and put the half-baked hot cake to my mouth with a smile.

"Yup, it's good."
"Ehehe~ well~yes. This is Arisa-chan's true ability."

Arisa twists her body bashfully.
This feels like a father with a daughter who just cooked her first dish.

"Delishlish~"
"Pochi's is honey-syrup-clad special nanodesu."
"Tasty."

Looks like these girls' shares were baked by Lulu.

◇

"Um, hey, Satou. Are we doing it too today?"
"Should we stop if you don't like it?"
"I-it's not that I don't like it."

Although this would create a misunderstanding if you only hear it, this is just a morning conversation with the princess who's reluctant with going to the labyrinth.

"That monster has the optimal reproductive power, however, should we use different monsters if you don't like it?"
"...Is it alright with different monsters?"
"Yes."

I affirmed the princess's question.

"Marine products~?"
"Meat is better than fish! Pochi likes the jungle area where she can collect dinosaur meat!"
"The dinosaur is good. They're rich in variety, and we can enjoy both chicken and beef flavor."

The beast girls' standard is a bit odd.

"Ara? Tama and Pochi, are you not going to the tasting festival today?"

"Aye~"
"Pochi will go on a hunt nodesu. It's absolutely not because she's tired with Lulu's omelette rice nodesuyo?"

I see, looks like Tama and Pochi had enough of omelette rices that only provide little chicken meat.
The dishes for the cooking contest should be rice dish, meat dish and soup, so the test today is probably for the soup.

Lulu, Arisa and Mia are going to the experiment for the cooking contest.
The other girls are going to power-level in the labyrinth.

I tell Echigoya Firm to buy ingredients that Lulu requested, and send the labyrinth group.
The jungle forest has been revived in just half a month even though it was half-destroyed back then.

"Ah! There's a Tricera nodesu! The helmet grill is really delicious nodesu."
"Chief is there too~ wrapped roast~?"
"There are raptors and archaeopteryxes too. The hunt today is worth it."

The beastkin girls are staring beyond the fern forest with drooling faces.
I told them, "Don't be too hard okay", used long-lasting continuous support magic on them, and then left the labyrinth.

Zena-san's wind magic skill should be high enough soon, I'll present her with a magic book that has [Fly] magic after today's dinner.

◇

Now then, I'm going to visit Holy State Parion, but going there through the air lane from the great desert would take too much time, so I decided

to take a bit of shortcut.

First, I changed into Kuro, and moved to the relay satellite located at the geostationary satellite orbit with Unit Arrangement.
Next, after using [Astro Suit] and [Barrier of Resist Fire] magic together, I dived into the atmosphere.

It might just have been my imagination, but since I felt that the descent velocity was slow, I used Flash Drive to accelerate more.

It felt a bit hot, but since my clothes aren't burning, it should be fine.
I've never done sky diving in the former world, but this is too fun, I'll get addicted to it.

Tama and Zena-san should be willing to sky dive with me together if I invited them.

When I'm about 10.000 feet above Holy State Parion, I move to the ground with Unit Arrangement by sight.
I made use of Unit Arrangement's inertia reset characteristic.

I use [Cold Wind] magic to blow off the heat accumulated from the descent.
Due to the time difference, its still right at dawn around here, I can see the Holy City Parion wrapped in morning fog beyond.

Now then, let's gather some intelligence before the native people come here.
I get Holy Parion Kingdom information by using [All Map Exploration].

As for the highest priority question, [Holy State Parion's Pope, Zazaris, being a demon lord], it turns out to be a false info.
The pope has a Unique Skill called [Heal All], and two titles, [God's Agent] and [Saint].

Since he has Unique Skill, that means he might be a reincarnated person with violet hair like Arisa.
I'm slightly interested with him, but I can just visit Holy City cathedral later.

I tried searching for other people with Unique Skill or demons, but it seems they don't exist here.
This kingdom has no labyrinth and there's no blank zone on the map of the area that's under direct control of the pope.
At most there's only the City Core room under the Holy City cathedral, but there shouldn't be a demon lord lurking in the center of the country.

Next I search powerful people whose level are 50 and above.
Excluding Pope Zazaris at level 51, it's only the Inquisition Bureau director and chief who are both at level 50.
I'm bothered with the Inquisition Bureau executors who have many and varied skills in spite of their relatively low levels.
Perhaps, Holy State Parion has a peculiar way to teach them skills.

In addition, I've also searched people who belong to the demon lord believers, [Light of Liberty], but there are only around 100 people in the whole territory, unexpectedly it seems they don't have much influence.

It seems that the whole Inquisition Bureau including the cardinal who commanded the sabotage in the Royal Capital and the chiefs are all members of [Light of Liberty].
Their number should not only be 100, they might be in other parishes of Holy State Parion. Apparently the territories in Holy State Parion are called parishes.

According to the document from the prime minister, the parish under the aforementioned cardinal is suspicious, thus I'm thinking of going around all the parishes with that one as the last so I won't miss anything.

Lastly, I searched for [Army of God] but there wasn't anyone like that.
They're probably in the middle of the reversal invasion campaign against the three country union.

◇

I'd like to sightsee the Holy City but I need to investigate the other parishes first.
I make a teleport point with [Create Safe House] in an undeveloped area near the holy city for when I'm going back here.

I get away from the point with sight-based Unit Arrangement, and then go around the parishes with Flash Drive.
I noticed that a lot of the populace here are afflicted with [Overworked], [Malnutrition], and [Illness], when I used [All Map Exploration] in each parish.
In contrast, the majority of the parishes' priests and the Holy City's populace are in good health.

It bothered me so I looked at the fields, most of them were infertile.
Looking at the split field with clover and root crops, I understand that they're using four-wheeled farming method, but both the wheat and the barely are hollow.

As an experiment, I went to an abandoned farm village, and used the advanced earth magic [Cultivation].
It's the same synchronous magic used by the royal court magicians to fix the land devastated by the heavenly dragon back then.

As the magic showed its effect, the reddish dried field turned into humus-like black soil in a blink of an eye.
Apparently it's not because the lack of magic essence (mana), but that

this country lacks earth magicians.

And then after five more parishes, when I was investigating the last parish, I finally found a town that looks like it's being used as the base of the [Light of Liberty]. The majority of the inhabitants seem to be its members.
And, there are seven level 50 strong people in this parish.
The parish head, the temple knight leader, and five priests of this town seem to be members of the [Light of Liberty].

There doesn't seem to be any demon lord here, but just in case, I'll check this town's City Core.

I made a teleport point in the outskirt, and went to the town's sky through sight-based Unit Arrangement.
Of course I've hidden myself with optical camouflage skill.

"What a gray town..."

I got such an impression since the plaster used in the town's buildings are of gray color and the townspeople are all wearing undyed simple clothing.
That impression is also fostered with the gloomy expressions of the residents.

The only color comes from the colorful belts of the priests and the ornaments and the clothes of the women who walk with them.

I lower my altitude and check the downtown's condition.

"●●●、●●"

>[Western Regions Language] Skill Acquired.

Even though I've got a skill, I can just use the force magic's [Translate].

I choose [Translate] magic on the Magic Column.

"--The wheat price is raised again."
"Again?! Wasn't it raised just three days ago?"
"Sheesh it's disgusting. It's going to be three times the last year's price soon right?"

The people who are rustling bags on a cart seem to be a wheat merchant and his customers.
I don't think it's strange for the staple food to suddenly raise in price during wartime.

When I randomly looked at the bag of wheat, it showed, [Wheat, low quality. 20% of the weight is of impurity.]
Looking at the price using Estimation skill, it's almost four times the price of Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital expensive variety.

"Looks like there's little impurity this time, I'll buy one jar much."
"Ey, come again!"

Apparently, it's normal for impurity to be mixed in the wheat of this country.
I'm glad that I didn't come to this country when I first came to another world.

As I'm nonchalantly looking at them, the wheat gets exchanged for mahjong stick-like things.
That seems to be the currency of this country.

"I wonder if the living condition would improve a little once we won the war."
"Haha, only pastors-sama and priests-sama will."
"I'm alright as long as my husband who's gone to war is safe."
"Hee, wasn't onee-san's husband one of the『Army of God』? Then there's

no way he'd lose."
"Wait there, my husband and my brother who have gone to the war front won't lose too."
"Hehe, please don't compete on it."

The other wife protested to the wheat seller man.

What.... So the [Army of God] is just militia men.
It's good that they're not some dangerous folks.

"Thank you. Currently, they should be attacking the tuban guys country with the northern Magic Turtle Fortress."
"That's amazing. Doesn't it take a lot of money to move that fortress?"
"That's why we gave a lot of charity to the church, I'm worried whether we can make it through the next winter."

Found some new keyword, I tried searching the so-called [Magic Turtle Fortress].

One of it remains to the east of the Holy City.
Since [Northern] was mentioned earlier, I investigated more and found three of it including the one I found earlier protecting the Holy City at the four directions.

It looks like a gigantic turtle magic beast fitted with countless magic cannons on its back.
It seems the turtle magic beasts are not tamed, but being controlled with some kind of magic device. That control unit probably needs a lot of money to be operated.
They're level 50s magic beasts, so they're just right to become prey for our girls, but as expected, breaking military equipment of another country would be bad.

However, I wonder if these [Magic Turtle Fortress] and the militia men

really pushed back army six times their size?
It seems God Parion bestows power to Saga Empire Hero, perhaps the [Army of God] also received blessing from God Parion and became six time stronger.

◇

While thinking such a thing, I intruded Parion Temple in the center of the town.
I didn't use the mana camouflage which has bad fuel consumption, but I used every hiding skill I have.

Level 40 male and female temple knights are guarding the door that leads to the City Core.
I feel that these class of temple knights are too much as gatekeepers.

I can't teleport to the other side of the door since it's of a different map.
I think I can just beat them up and enter since they're [Light of Liberty (Terrorist)] people anyway, but let's think of other methods first.

Magic that I can spontaneously use have increased ever since I gained the ability to chant, so there's a lot of magic that I don't remember on the Magic Column.
And, I found the most appropriate magic on the Magic Column.
It's the intermediate force magic [Through Eye].

It was quite handy during the initial stage of the casted holy sword production, but recently, I haven't used it at all.

When I pick [Through Eye] on the Magic Column, I gain the ability to see through the magic metal-made door.
Before my line of sight could wander to the female knight's breasts, I

teleported into the room with [Unit Arrangement]. Looks like it's usable with sight through magic.

I use [All Map Exploration] in the room.
As I thought, this area is the [City Core Space].

There's mostly no one here, but there's a person of interest in here.

--It's the demon lord.

I never thought that I would meet another demon lord in two consecutive days.

The demon lord this time has [Transfer] and [Familiar] Unique Skills. The titles are [Demon Lord], [Devotee], and [Calamity Saintess].
It's a woman, her original race is [Long Earkin]. She's 24 year old, she's young.
In addition, she doesn't have even one normal skill, only gift-like skills; [Self Status] and [Hide Skill]. Her level is only 50 too.

It can be said that she's the weakest demon lord I've ever meet.

If she's a demon lord that can be reasoned with, now is the chance to persuade her when there's no familiar.
I'm quite bothered with her [Sickness: Depression] condition, but I can just cure it with [Cure Disease] and [Spirit Exaltation] magic.

Thinking so, I changed into hero Nanashi and walked to her room.

Of course, I won't plunge recklessly.
I've taken a little "Insurance".

"Good evening, demon lord."
"Holy sword? Then you must be a hero right? You came to kill me didn't

you."

When the beauty with a gloomy smile stood up, her long violet hair flowed back.
I wonder if she doesn't wear underwear below her silk priest clothing, her body line is slightly tempting me.

Looks like she's maintaining her normal ego.
It's troubling that she looks like she wishes for death, but I feel that we can negotiate peacefully.

"But, I'm sorry. I must kill you in accordance to the order."

--Order?

While deriding herself sadly, she slowly lifts her arm toward me.
As if telling me to kill her first before she could finish.

"Perish..."

When the bracelet on her arm shined, hero Nanashi and the ground he was standing on turned into black dust.
Since the City Core behind her throne lit up when the bracelet shined, it's probably a kind of ceremonial magic through the City Core.

I'm glad that I used a phantom.

I release the mana camouflage, and hit the depressed demon lord on her vital to make her swoon.
I took her bracelet the moment she fainted.

Next I'll see what I can do with the City Core.
I tried touching the City Core to see if I could gain control of it, but it was denied with, [An Exclusive User already Exists].

--Luminous point behind.

"Obey me!"

When I turned around, I saw a black clothed person casting violet light.

--Violet light?

It might be an omen of Unique Skill.
Maybe I should fall back with [Unit Arrangement] now and confront it again later?

My thought revolves during that instant.

"■"

Hearing the chant leaking from the black clothed person, I threw away the evade option.
If the person was really a reincarnated person or a teleported person that can use Unique Skills, there should be no need to chant.

"■"

Then there's a high chance that that violet light is simply a bluff.

Moreover--.

"■"

--I can just interrupt it if it's a chant.

I go before the black clothes with Ground Shrink and throw a kick to the person's stomach to interrupt the chant.

The black clothes tried to evade with a speed faster than Tama, but I'm not gentle enough to let it avoid easily.

"■"

Sliding using Ground Shrink while kicking, I hit the black clothes just right.

"Compul(Ge)"

While in the middle of the Command Word, the black clothes sank into the wall with the speed of a cannonball.
Looks like the last Ground Shrink was too much, the black clothes was thrown into the wall with a higher force than I expected.

The arms and legs are bent in the wrong direction, must be my imagination.
The person must be of a race who has a lot of joints.

However, that was my blunder.

"sion(ass)"

The Attentive Ears skill picked up the activation of the remaining Command Word from the man's mouth.

--Geass?
The skill that bounds Arisa and Lulu?

I choose the countermeasure while being surprised in my accelerated mind.
I scroll the Magic Column, and pick up the [Spirit Guard] in the mind magic category.

>Unable to resist Geass effect. Dominated.
>[Geass] Skill Acquired.
>[Geass Resistance] Skill Acquired.

Right before I can select the activation of the countermeasure magic, such logs flow in the corner of my view.
At the same time, red cobweb-like pattern emerges on top of the AR reading, my consciousness becomes turbid.

"Kneel, my servant."

Black cloth--er, the person wearing black clothing--no, my great master.

"Yes, my master."

Abiding my master command, I knelt down.

Various AR information are showed next to master.
The red cobweb displayed on my vision is bothersome, but it's not enough to hinder me from reading the information.

His title is [Dark Sage], [Ruler], [10.000-shape Magician], [Master of Demon Lord], [One who Reaches Man Limit], and [Lord]. A level 99 magic warrior with more than 100 skills, including [Geass], [Pain Resistance], and [Chanting Interruption Resistance].

He's an unrivaled being who has [Counter] and [Soul Shot] Unique Skills.

I long for the next order from my great master.

14-7. Holy State Parion (2)

*

Satou's here. There are times when I act on impulse without reasoning from myself, but when that happens I decide to obediently entrust my impulse. It's boring if it's all with reason after all.

◇

"I can't read the name--you, speak your name."

My great master bestowed me the first order.
I cannot see his countenance below the same black clothes, but it must be a face full of dignity.

I want to apologize for my barbaric act earlier, but I must prioritize obeying the order.
I also wanted to heal his wound, but it seems he's healed himself with his magic--I mean, master has healed the wound with master's own magic.

"My name is--"

When I was about to say it, I faltered since I remembered that it's an alias.
I have to manipulate the Exchange column and change it back to Satou.

For some reason it's been locked and I can't change it--I wonder why?

"Hmph, as expected of someone at level 99 like me. I can see how you've reached the limit of men. To think that you resist my Compulsion (Geass)...."

It seems my great master has misunderstood because I faltered.

He's unexpectedly thoughtless--I mean, wary.

I negated my arrogance thought and opened my mouth to correct master's misunderstanding, but unfortunately, master continued the talk, so I hesitated to interrupt.
I wait for master to finish talking.

"I add another order! Bow before me, and speak your name! ■■■■■ Compulsion (Geass)"

After master was tinged with violet colored light like the activation of Unique Skills, master's skill was invoked.
The log said that it was resisted, but I'll keep it a secret to protect my master's honor.

Now then, it looks like it's alright to tell my name now.
Before I could do it, I should toss my violet disguise wig.

For some reason, the red cobwebs intensify in my view.

They're obstructing me from seeing my great master....
Before I take off my disguise mask, I lightly wave my hand to brush away the cobwebs--.

◇

--I see.

"I'm Shiga Kingdom's Nanashi."
"My power finally gets through huh--that was some trouble."

While telling my name to the black clothes, I allocate points to Geass Resistance skill and Geass skill.
With clear mind after having negated his [Compulsion(Geass)] skill, I begin to check the situation and plan the countermeasure.

It seems the red cobwebs on the AR earlier were showing the [Geass] effect.

I got a terrible headache like my braincells were wounded when I negated the effect earlier.
I look at my Stamina Gauge after confirming that my Pain Resistance skill is turned on.
It's been completely recovered due to the effect of [Self-Recovery] skill.

The reason why black clothes was able to ignore our level differences and had its skill reached me is probably because of the effect of his Unique Skill, [Soul Shot].
It must have similar effect to Arisa's [Never Give Up].

Looks like I got careless since Arisa was the only one who could affect me with abnormal status so far.
After I've finished my business in Holy State Parion, I'll create some permanent defensive equipment like Raka, and for everyone's shares too.

Oops, let's think about that later and cast [Spirit Guard] that I was going to use before getting manipulated.
With this, I should be fine against his [Geass] and mind magic.

He also has troublesome sounding skill called [Counter] that I should be careful with.
It's probably the Unique Skill version of [Counter Magic] and [Counter Shell] magic in my magic line up.
It probably needs to be re-chanted every time he uses it just like with the

magic, so there should be a chance I can use.

--That's right, re-chant.

Even though he has Unique Skill, he chanted it just like he did the first time.

He doesn't have [Demon Lord] title, and his name sounds like this world's name, [Sorijero].
According to labyrinth lower layer Corpse's story, reincarnated people are named by the god, and they should be named with their old name when they're born.
Therefore, he's probably neither a reincarnated person nor a transported person.

"Demon lord! Absorb this guy's skill and level, and make him into your familiar!"

Black clothes--Sorijero ordered the demon lord, but unfortunately for him, she's still fainted from my strike.

"■■■■■ Compulsion (Geass)--"

Violet ripples appeared on the body of Sorijero who heard me chanting [Geass].
He's probably invoked [Counter] Unique Skill.
Looks this skill doesn't need to be chanted.

I give him the order after confirming that state.

"--Click your fingers once!"

>Resisted Geass Effect.

Such is displayed on my log when I gave him the order, but the violet light that was running on Sorijero's body disappeared.
Apparently, [Counter] is a type of skill that doesn't need to be chanted, but it needs to be re-set every time you want to use it.

Alright, if I can resist my own skill that was countered, I should be fine against Sorijero's Geass.
I just need to be careful with the [Soul Shot].

I pick [Geass] skill and activate it.
Just like skills and magic that need to be chanted, I don't need to chant it anymore for the second time and beyond.

I saw Sorijero lifting a scepter that seems to be the City Core's terminal.

--Oops, it'd be annoying if he uses City Core to teleport away.

"I forbid teleportation."
"Impossible! ■ Guaaaaaaaaa"

Sorijero was trying to chant while holding the Scepter on one hand, but he screamed halfway through and stopped.
He's vomiting blood and his condition becomes [Weakened: Violation of Order].
Looks like [Geass] skill is quite dangerous.

I choose [Geass] skill once again from the skill column and activate it.

"I forbid the use of every skill"
"I-if I can't teleport then--■ nuoooooo"

Sorijero who was going to use some magic skills rolls over from the acute pain.

....This guy never learns.

I can finally see his face from the unfolded hood.

He's an old apefolk kin with golden colored body hair mixed with gray hair, the left half of his face is burned, while the right half of his face has violet colored specks on it.
His right arm shown from the rolled up sleeves has dark violet hair from the wrist up.

"What's wrong? Do you find me ugly? How would you, who have been granted with god's blessing from birth, understand our craving? This color I got as the compensation for seeking god's power is the proof of my belief!"

Umm--.

In short, I guess it's like, "I was jealous with people with Unique Skills, so I snatched it away from other people and got my body hair turned into violet color."
I checked just in case, but he doesn't have [Snatch]-type skill.

"Don't think you can win with this!"

Sorijero lamented while shedding tears of blood.
Matching that scream, two violet light ripples appeared on his body.

Apparently, Unique Skills aren't included in [Skill].

"I forbid the use of Unique Skills."

I impose Sorijero with another prohibition.

Still, leaving aside [Counter], I don't think there's any meaning in using

[Soul Shot] when you can't use any skill.

Sorijero muttered [Sword] and swung the Scepter, and then it transformed into a thin one-handed sword in the blink of an eye.
That's quite a fantasy-like weapon.

I blow away Sorijero, who appeared in front of me with a speed that rivaled Ground Shrink, with a front kick.
It seems he reflexively used evade skill, he bounced on the floor while bleeding from from his ears.

I touch the one-handed sword that got separated from him with [Magic Hand], and put into the Storage.
With this he can no longer use City Core even if he violated the order.

Sorijero who staggeringly stood up takes out a scroll from his chest while drinking a magic potion he took out from the pouch on his waist.

"If it's scrolls--"
"I forbid the use of magic power."
"--Damn"

He finally learned after the third time, he throws away the scroll he took out.

"I forbid you to act."

Sorijero stopped moving after I gave him the last order.

....I feel like I've become kotodama god or yokai you know.

When I was walking toward him, Sorijero spat out a needle-like dark thing.
Of course I lightly evaded it, but he started to run at top speed toward the

exit using that chance.

Looks like he's resisted the last [Geass].
Despite its convenience, it might be a skill that's easy to resist.

"Action is--"

Sorijero's body got tinged in dark violet light just when I was trying to add another [Geass].
Looks like he's resisted the [Geass] of [Forbidden to use Unique Skills].
I stopped talking in caution of his Counter.

"Gwoooo"

Sorijero is bleeding from his ears and eyes, maybe due to the effect of violation of orders.

Nevertheless, he ran like the wind toward the exit.
Looks like he wants to escape using this chance, but I can't let him do that.

I choose [Remote Stun] from the Magic Column and strike the magic into him one after another.

"I-Impossible--"

Several of it were countered and came back to me, but if it's just Remote Stun, I can deal with even thousands of it no problem.

BAKUWANAAAAAAAAAH !
<TLN: Written in Latin on the raw. From "Baka na" meaning "Impossible", "No way", or "I can't believe this" in this context.>

Sorijero who screamed in a strange voice transforms into a distorted form.

Oh no--He has turned into a demon lord after using too much Unique

Skills.
He's about two times as tall and looks more like a monkey.

"I forbid you to take any action."

Looks like it's not effective against Sorijero who has become a demon lord.
Even though the depressed female demon lord was able to be ruled under [Geass], this is somewhat unreasonable.

--Well fine.

It just means that I can't use the easy method, I can just thoroughly beat him like the usual.

It seems he's already broken off from the geass order, he can use magic and skills.
Looks like he's lost his ego, doesn't seem like he's going to teleport.

I vaporize the barrage of flame balls and lightning spheres with a holy sword.
Even if they're powered up with Unique Skills, it's useless if the magic are destroyed.

I physically knock down the demon lord who's screaming gao, gyao around and then cut his limbs to make him stop resisting.

"Demon lords really are tenacious."

The demon lord regrows his limbs even though he doesn't have regeneration-type Unique Skill.
Sometimes he used [Counter], but I tore them off just like with the attacking balls earlier.

The most dangerous one is when he used [Soul Shot] and [Geass] together, but since I could see the activation timing from the violet ripple, I evaded them by using golems and illusions as the scapegoats the moment they were activated.
It's not that scary when you know the trick.

When the monkey demon lord has been weakened enough, I scoop out the [God's Fragment] using the [Black Arm Encroached with Divinity].
After doing it for the second time, his [Demon Lord] title changed into [Former Demon Lord].

『Gonosen, haa, ultimate techniquee』
『Hmph. Hanging it all in one attack. I don't care what'll happen next.』

I cut the [God's Fragments] who were playing around with the Divine Sword, eliminating them.

There wasn't any drama but, he should turn back into the apefolk--.

He should have, yet for some reason he's turning into black sand-like mist.
It's like with the demon.

It had strange influence on his body after all, perhaps unlike Shin boy, old Sorijero had no qualification to host the [God's Fragment].

◇

"Now then, do you want to fight me too?"

I asked the Depressed Demon Lord who had woken up before I knew it.
After glancing at old Sorijero who was turning into mist, she slowly

stands up.

"Yes, I cannot disobey the order...."

The Depressed Demon Lord affirmed while unsteadily walking to me.

"Are you still under the influence of Geass?"
"It won't disappear even if the caster is killed--"

The Depressed Demon Lord shook her head while looking like she has given up.

"What are the orders you got?"
"I was ordered to『Do not go out of the room』,『Do not use your power without permission』,『Report any intruder』, and also,『Arrest the intruder if possible, if not kill them』, those four--"

I see, it seems she has no choice but to fight me with that last order.

Come to think of it, why was my condition like I got brainwashed?
I was ordered to vaguely [Obey me], I wonder if that turned me into something like a slave?

The Depressed Demon Lord is reaching toward my neck slowly.

"--That's why kill me. If possible, I'll be thankful if you can do it without too much pain."

Even if I'm asked to, it's hard to kill a fleeting beauty who isn't even resisting.

....Right.

"You do not need to kill any intruder."

I try to overlap the [Geass] as a test.

"It hurts, it's like my head is split."

The Depressed Demon Lord sits down on the floor while suffering.
I draw close to her and heal her with anesthetic magic and healing magic.

"A-are you going to torment me with torture?"
"I'm sorry, I didn't intend to.... By the way, is it alright for you not to kill me?"
"....Eh?"

Looking puzzled, the Depressed Demon Lord looks at her own hands.

"No way, the order has been canceled."

Just as I've guessed, it seems to be possible to cancel [Geass] by overwriting it.

"I have a suggestion--"

I begin to persuade the Depressed Demon Lord while eliminating the [Light of Liberty] guys who showed up on the entrance.
I somehow succeeded persuading her thanks to sacrificing the enjoyable lunch I should have had with everyone.

"Then you're fine with『Do not make any familiar without permission』, 『Do not act like a demon lord』, 『Uphold Japanese moral standard unless it is unavoidable』?"
"Yes, it's enough if I can uphold that much."

I tie a [Contract] with her.

"I have another request, is it alright?"
"Depends on the content."

I listen to the Depressed Demon Lord.

"I'd like you to please help me getting back Norio's Unique Skill that I had given to the pope of this country."
"Norio?"
"Yes, the boy who was reincarnated in the neighboring country...."

Summing up the Depressed Demon Lord's story, it seems the Unique Skill of a kidnapped panther-head kin, Norio-kun (9 year old) was given to Pope Zazaris through the Depressed Demon Lord's unique skill [Familiar] and [Transfer] by the Dark Sage's order.
Looks like Norio-kun whose Unique Skill was taken by the Depressed Demon Lord got beheaded by the Dark Sage afterward and died.
The Unique Skills that the Dark Sage used were also gotten from two reincarnated people whose Unique Skills were robbed and then killed.

While silently praying for the people who were killed for their Unique Skills, I have a little question.

--Does that mean the one who forced Arisa and Lulu with the [Geass] is not the Dark Sage, but a different person?

Arisa's Unique Skills are useful without a doubt.
There's no doubt that your force will be more powerful if you give them to your subordinates.

Apparently, there are other people who can use [Geass] beside the Dark Sage and the weaselkin emperor.
It's quite a rare skill, so I was under the impression that the royal court magician who forced the [Geass] to Arisa and Lulu was the same person

as the Dark Sage.

I'd better prepare the way to cope against it for my companion.

"Secondly, I want to hold a memorial service for the people who got discarded in this castle's underground."
"Is it Norio-kun earlier?"
"There's a lot others too...."

The Dark Sage kidnapped people who were hindrances and high leveled ones, and used the Depressed Demon Lord's skills to level up and give skills to the [Light of Liberty]'s executives.
After absorbing them, he tortured them and used tools to create malice out of them.

They're quite inhumane.
Let's hold a memorial service and offering to not only the pope's Unique Skill, but also to the people whose skills and levels were robbed by the [Light of Liberty].

"Understood. I'll grant your wish."
"Thank you.... Hero."

The Depressed Demon Lord who showed her smile nodded powerfully.

Now then, let's commence the punishment.

14-8. Holy State Parion (3) [Revised]

*

Satou's here. When a punishment went too far, it became a lynching. It's important not to lose your calm in order to keep it from going too far.

◇

"Now then, first I'll seize the City Core."

There are probably other people who can use City Core's power besides the Dark Sage Sorijero after all.

I reach my hand toward the City Core that's floating in the air while emitting blue light.

『Welcome, king of the higher domain. Would you register this land as a satellite city?』

Unlike before where it said "An exclusive user already exists", a voice that's hard to distinguish as either male or female spoke.

--Who the heck's a king.

>Title [King] Acquired.
>Title [Anonymous King] Acquired.
>Title [Hero King] Acquired.

Ignoring the retort in my mind, system messages displaying title acquisitions appeared on the log.
These [Anonymous King] and [Hero King] are probably due to my name being a blank space and my title [Hero].

The higher domain must be about the [Dragon's Valley] Source. It's a Source that was ruled by the Dragon God after all.

"Register it."
『Acknowledged--』

>Title [Land Lord] Acquired.

『--Do you want to let the other supporting wardens to succeed?』
"No, I don't."
『Removing supporting wardens. Do you want to retrieve the terminal interfaces loaned to the supporting wardens?』
"Please do."

After agreeing to the City Core's suggestion, seven bracelets that look the same as the one the depressed demon lord wore appeared before me.

『Unable to retrieve the first terminal interface loaned to an individual named Shizuka. If you'd like to create a new one, 20000 MP is needed.』
"No, there's no need to make a new one."

Shizuka that the City Core mentioned is the depressed demon lord's name.
Apparently, it can't retrieve items in my Storage.

『Do you want to carry over the environmental setting?』

Setting huh.... I don't want to tamper that, but--.

"Display the setting difference between the previous lord and the one before that."
『Acknowledged. Red indicators are of the previous lord, blue indicators are of the lord before that.』

It seems the Dark Sage had changed it arbitrarily, there are some large differences between the red and the blue indicators.

The magic power that should have been originally used to stabilize people's life is diverted to the lord, the Dark Sage, to strengthen himself and for his experiments.

"Change the setting to the blue ones."
『--Completed the change. Due to the insufficient magic power, the climate setting change will be reflected in the land after 21 days.』

With this the neighboring agricultural life should be better I'm sure.
Now then, it's about time to get back from the digression.

"Can you close this room?"
"It is possible. Do you want to execute it?"
"Do it. I'll be ordering it from the terminal if I want to cancel it."

I ordered the city core after collecting the seven bracelet-shaped terminals from the floor to my storage with [Magic Hand].

Now then, there's a reason why I seized the City Core.
It's in order to freely move in the city with [Unit Arrangement].

Now that I've completed the preparation, let's begin the punishment.

◇

"Damn you false god's fanatic!"
"W-why is the『Demon Lord of Blessing』following the hero?"

When I went out of the room accompanied by the depressed demon lord--

Shizuka, the combatants of the [Light of Liberty] were waiting as expected.

I made low leveled people to faint with the anti-personal [Sound Pressure] magic, and beat down the people who withstood that and people who were pretending to be unconscious with [Remote Stun] magic.

"Oy oy, what the heck is this?"
"That white mask looks to be the culprit."
"Can I eat that? I'm hungry."

Three men and women who acted like some big-shots appeared on the entrance of the hall filled with agonizing cries.

"I-it's the four kings!"
"T-that hero will meet his end now."
"After all the Lightning Speed--"

The mobs who were still conscious had begun to explain about the people who appeared.
It seems they were going to tell their names and nicknames, but since I don't intend to remember them, I'll make a short work out of them.

It looks like they can evade magic, so using the combination of Ground Shrink and vital point strikes, I knock down the three four kings.
Only the man called Lightning Speed tried to make an evasive maneuver while grinning, but he still couldn't avoid my combo techniques, and fell down to the floor.

I completely neutralized the tumbling man and the remaining mobs with [Remote Stuns].

Then, the last of four kings made a surprise attack.

"Got youuuuuu!"

I knock down the [Light of Liberty] executive who has appeared by smashing through the wall with [Magic Arm].
He was in plain sight since the radar had caught him.

Since there's no [Light of Liberty] magician that can use teleport here, I throw them in the [Desert] sub-space after binding them with magic.
The sand might be a bit hot, but they shouldn't die with just that much.

◇

"I knew your skill from defeating the Dark Sage, but you're really ridiculously strong."

Demon lord Shizuka crosses her arms like she's astounded.
The hills that are probably of F cups are getting emphasized, but it doesn't seem like she's trying to tempt me.

Together with her, I advance through the corridor heading to the underground tomb.
Countless torture devices were put in a hall along the way.

"Fuhahaha, masked man! You have a bad luck coming to the room of this Bazef-sama! I'll show you the thing called true pain--"

I neutralize a suspicious looking macho who appeared between the torture devices with mind magic [Pain].
I thought he would scream, but instead he's convulsing while discharging various body fluids.
Apparently, he's not strong against pain himself.

I imprison the fainted macho to the same place as the people earlier.

Then I purge the torture devices in this room with [Disintegration].
They wouldn't be put to good use even if I left them, and I wouldn't have any use of them even if I put them in my Storage.

Demon lord Shizuka is staring in amazement at the torture devices disappearance.
While ignoring her words that are mixed with awe and shock, I go to the altar beside the pit inside the mausoleum.

"What an ominous place. I feel like I can hear the grief of those who were given unfair deaths."

An item called [Curse Pot] is left on the altar.
According to the detailed information on the AR reading, it seems to be a magic tool used to collect grudges and negative thoughts.

--KWONOURWAAAAMYUUUUYEEE.
<TLN: Written in Latin on the raw. Means "This grudge".>

>[Soul Hearing] Skill Acquired.

Sorry but I can't stand horror, so I don't intend to activate that skill.

"I can hear the voices of souls--"

Yet, demon lord Shizuka heard some unnecessary voices.

"It seems they want to seek revenge."

I guess that's normal for people who died unnaturally.
However, I don't intend to help them in the mass slaughter--no wait.

Perhaps I can control the apparition created from soul magic.

According to the magic books I've read, it's possible to control the ghost as long as the user has higher level and high soul magic skill level.

Then maybe I can grant them the revenge while also easing my work.

I locate the spell I need from the soul magic book.

"....■■ Create Lich Lord"
『Our master, please bestow us the opportunity for revenge.』
"No."

A Lich Lord wearing a worn-out brown robe floated up from the pit.
It raised an echoing voice that chilled me to the bone, but since I don't intend to take part in murder, I rejected it.

Defiant thought flowed from the Lich Lord, but it immediately quieted down when I denied it.
I got it easily suppressed, but it feels like a balloon that's on the verge of imploding.

"I'm only ordering you to take away the skills and levels from people who killed you guys."
『....That is amusing. Truly thrilling. Pushing people who reveled in splendor down to hell on earth. Our master truly understands what revenge means.』

I'm a bit opposed to the Lich Lord's valuation, but now it should go on neutralizing the [Light of Liberty] bunch without killing them.

◇

"Y-you damn apparition! I'll purify you with my holy magic!"

"Such thing like an apparition is no match against me who have received blessing from demon god-sama."
"G-go away! Go away, you damn undead! I-I cannot die in a place like this!"

There were some people who resisted like such, but it seemed that it was impossible to block level 50 Lich Lord's level drain and skill drain when they couldn't move.

I entrusted demon lord Shizuka to supervise the Lich Lord while I concentrated capturing people whose level are higher than 20 in the city.
There were some people who went out of the city to seek help from their friends in the Holy City's Inquisition Bureau, but I made a surprise attack with space magic's teleport and let them join their friends to become the Lich Lord's victims.

Of course, I also handled the Inquisition Bureau guys and cardinals like so too.

Pope Zazaris is in fact not a member of the [Light of Liberty] so I'm not handing him to the Lich Lord.
I'm going to deal with him together with demon lord Shizuka later.

"--So, is it over?"
『It's over.... We deprived the power from all of the fanatics. O master, our gratitude for granting us the chance to get our revenge.』

After telling me that, the Lich Lord got wrapped in light and disappeared as if it was purified with magic.

"What is that I wonder?"
"Looks like the Lich Lord has left it."

An item called [Spirit Orb] fell on the place where the Lich Lord was.

I have a hunch that it's a crystallization of the levels and skills that the Litch Lord snatched, but since the detailed information on the AR reading is blank, I don't really know its true nature.
I'll keep it in the Storage for the time being and ask Corpse and Yuika about it when I visit the labyrinth lower layer.

◇

"You demon! You think you can invade the holy ground of this holy city parion! ■ Divine Punish"

Pope Zazaris cut me and demon lord Shizuka with an illusion of a huge sword of light.
This is the first time I've seen him, he looks very young you wouldn't have guessed he's 150 year old. His race is human, so he's probably maintaining his youth by using god's miracle or youth medicines. His long blond hair looks very glossy.

I've come to the great shrine in the holy city of the holy state Parion with demon lord Shizuka.
In order to collect [Heal All] unique skill from Pope Zazaris of course.

"--Accept the familiarization"

Using [Geass] on the neutralized pope, I made him accept the demon lord Shizuka's familiarization.
Next we transfer his Unique Skill to a small louse.

Of course the small louse couldn't hold the [God's Fragment] and instantly began to turn into a demon lord.
Its body turned violet colored, the transparent wings turned into dark violet color.

The louse demon lord's level is 50.
Apparently, once you turn into a demon lord your level becomes 50 at minimum.

The louse demon lord that has become gigantic breaks through the sanctuary's ceiling.

"W-what an abominably colored monster! Do you want to let that monster attack our holy city!"

Leaving alone the pope who's unable to stand up, I go to eliminate the louse demon lord before it could fly away.
I finely chopped the louse demon lord with a holy sword while leaving blue afterglow, and then absorbed the emerging [God's Fragment] by cutting it with the Divine Sword.
I cut it quickly, so I couldn't hear the [God's Fragment] muttering.

I was slightly hesitant removing the useful-looking [Heal All] like this, but since the former user had been killed already, and giving it to someone would lead them turning into a demon lord if they used the skill too much, we chose this way since handling it would be too troublesome.

"Answer my questions."

I interrogate the pope about the Dark Sage and the [Light of Liberty] after hypnotizing him with mind magic.
Guided by me, the pope answers the questions intermittently.

"....It is impossible for Dark Sage-dono to be a demon lord believer....You asked the same thing as my foolish treacherous retainers....Dark Sage-dono is a pious believer of our god who has helped raising our priests using unparalleled techniques....I gave him the great priest and landlord position for his achievements...."

Surprisingly, he didn't know that the Dark Sage is related to the [Light of Liberty].

Moreover, he looks like he doesn't know about the existence of demon lord Shizuka.

"Then how did you get the『Heal All』?"
"....The great god Parion must have bestowed it to me...."

It seems the pope doesn't remember demon lord Shizuka transferring the [Heal All] from Norio-kun.

After interrogating him more, I felt that he was like Baron Muno and the others when they were brainwashed by the lesser demon.
It seems his memories were tampered by the Dark Sage.

Disguising demon lord Shizuka's name and appearance as a caution was a good decision.
Right now she's wearing bull horns on her head and a blank mask. Her skin has also been made to look like a dark elf's.

It looks like the pope was also used by the Dark Sage.

"The interrogation is enough with these much right? What do you want to do demon lord?"
"I do not wish for anything more after taking the Unique Skill."

Then we can just leave it at this.
I cancel the mind magic for interrogation.

Demon lord Shizuka also releases the familiarization.

Managing the country should be difficult from now on since all of the

high-leveled pope's subordinates are gone, but that's for the ruler, Pope Zazaris, to work hard on.

"So you won't kill me! Demon lord and his attendant!"

Leaving the screaming pope alone, I take demon lord Shizuka's hand and send her to a safe area with [Teleport an Object].

"My『Judge Eye』can see through all disguises! Demon Lord Ducky and his attendant Rasputin! I'll let all temples in the continent to know about you!"

[Ducky] and [Rasputin] that the pope spoke of are aliases that I just made up with [Name Order] earlier.
I have to change the demon lord's name back to Shizuka later.

Looking at him, it looks like even the rare skill [Judge Eyes] can't see through Mana Camouflage.
Feeling relieved, I moved to the desert where demon lord Shizuka was waiting.

After that, I threw the [Light of Liberty] members from this country to the underground prison of the Holy State Parion after taking away their disguise items.
Of course I've left a written board about their offenses and evidences of them being demon lord believers so that they won't be released.
The only person I've taken to Shiga Kingdom's underground prison is the cardinal who was involved with the sakuramochi incident.

◇

"Can I really live here?"

"Yeah, I can also prepare someone to take care of you if you need it."
"Don't need--but, I'd like to keep a small bird and a puppy."

I brought the depressed demon lord Shizuka to a place in the farm area that's been covered in Yuika's barrier.
Oops, she's recovered from the depression condition, and she's promised that she won't act like a demon lord, so I should call her Shizuka.

At first I thought of taking Shizuka to the labyrinth lower layer where the reincarnated people are living, but since she wanted to quietly live in a place with no other people for a while, I brought her here.
Of course it's not for the sake of keeping Shizuka but for her peace.
I feel that the demons would meddle if she were in the outside world.

"Okay. Do you have any request for the bird's and the puppy's types?"
"Right.... I'd like a java sparrow and siberian husky."

The java sparrow is not a problem, but I've never seen a siberian husky here.
I'll bring a kind of dog that's similar to it for the time being.

To make her secluded life easier, I've prepared a splendid house on the river bank of the farm area with [Create House] and an agricultural land nearby with [Cultivation].

Furthermore, I've left several Wood Puppets for the labor works.

"Hey, can I look inside the house?"
"It's your house, so you can do as you please."

I gave an answer to Shizuka who was curiously looking at the house.
After seeing her off, I installed a freezer, a refrigerator, a washing machine, an automatic bathtub and a flush toilet magic tools.
Once I've done the one-man work and comes back, Shizuka is currently

looking at the clothing on the bed while frowning.
I've put some change of clothes when she wasn't present, I wonder if it's not to her liking?

"Are these underwear made in Japan? But, my classmate said that men would give underwear because they want to take it off themselves. I'm being protected by him after all, I can't refuse if he wants me I think. But, but, doing it with someone whose face I never see is."

She's quite talkative when she's talking to herself.

No she's been freed from her depressed condition, so this might be her true character.
On top of having big breasts, Shizuka is a beauty and I don't have any complain regarding her age, but I feel that marriage or mistress routes would certainly be waiting for me if I treat her like that, so I don't intend in putting my hands on her. I'm fine with playing around limited to the professionals.

I call Shizuka after knocking on the door.

"I've put magic tools, foodstuff and flavoring needed for your livelihood for the present. You use them like you use electronics in Japan, and if you want to eat other food, you can collect fish and shellfish in the river, and fruits in the forest."

Of course I've left three months worth of preserved food and daily general goods in the underground storehouse.
The only thing missing is liquor. I've left out the liquor since there's a danger of her falling into alcohol dependency.

"Okay. I saw some shrimp when I was looking at the river earlier, the nature around her is quite rich isn't it."

--Shrimp?

I caught something off from Shizuka's words.

"What's wrong?"
"No, I was just thinking where I could get a siberian husky."
"It's alright as long as it looks similar. I just want the warmth."

After telling her that I'd get it quick, I moved out of Shizuka's house with Unit Arrangement.
I did not teleport to the solitary island palace.

I went to the abandoned fort in Muno Earldom since there's something I want to investigate.
In order to check it, I cast [Another World] on the bank of a streamlet near the abandoned fort, creating a small sub-space.

"There are really small fish and shellfish in this streamlet too...."

Looks like living beings are created along with the sub-space.
I realized that I had the wrong idea when I thought that far.

"....I should've realized it when I saw that there were plants."

Moreover this country has the alchemy technology about human body to create homonculus like Nana.
Due to the moral value from my former world hindering, I've been thinking that creating living beings is something special.

Human body alchemy huh.... If I make use of the code that creates living beings in this [Another World]....

I shake my head to throw away the inquiring mind.

"No, I really should not."

Yup, for my mental health, let's stop trying to do that.
After nodding twice, I write a postscript on the taboo entry in the memo pad, "Forbidden from developing magic that creates intelligent life."
I should entrust creating intelligent life to the god after all.

◇

I tell the usual members about the extermination of the two demon lords and then head to the labyrinth where my companions are enjoying hunting the dinosaurs.
I've asked Tifaliza in the Royal Capital for the dog and the small bird matter.

"Sa-Satou-san! I-it's terrible!"

As soon as I arrived at the labyrinth, Sera who was resting in the shade rushed to me.

"There was an omen for the god's oracle! There might be a demon lord manifesting somewhere!"
"Not an oracle itself, but an omen is it?"

It's probably about the ape demon lord that I defeated two hours ago and the louse demon lord defeated one hour ago.

"Y-yes. In order to receive oracles, I need to be in the holy sanctuary where it's easy for god's voice to reach, or create a simple sanctuary and use a ceremonial magic."

I see. Looks like you can't receive oracle anywhere anytime.

For now, I'll calm her down.

"Two demon lords appeared in the Holy State Parion earlier, I think it must be about them."
"T-two demon lords?!"

Sera raised a voice of despair.

"Master, if they appeared in two different place, please leave one to us. We'll prevent any victim no matter what it takes until Master has finished with the other one."
"Master, permission to deploy."
"Tama too~?"
"Po-Pochi too! A de-demon lord is nothing nanodesu."

Before I could calm Sera down, Liza and the others drew close to me with determined expressions.
Zena-san and the princess fell on their knees without being able to talk.
Lady Karina looks like she's hesitating whether to participate or not.

"Everyone, calm down, I've already defeated the two demon lords, so don't worry about it."
"T-the demon lords have been defeated?"
"In such a short time, and two of them?"
"Admiring master."
"Goodjob~?"
"Very, very amazing nodesu!"

I lend my hands to Zena-san and the princess, lifting them up.

"A-as expected of my Sa--"
"Satou-san, you're amazing!"

Zena-san whose eyes' shines had recovered interrupted the princess and

took my hands, swinging them.
Waiting until Zena-san released my hands bashfully, I took everyone back to the solitary island palace.

Now then, the airship should arrive at the Royal Capital tomorrow, I'll go visit some of my acquaintances.

The day after tomorrow is the appointed time for the contact from the hero's party, I have to ask about their progress with the demon lord extermination.
Recently, I've only conversed with the secretary lady who's house-sitting, I'll talk to Hayato directly through [Telephone] if he's still absent.

I also have to tell everyone about me sheltering demon lord Shizuka.

14-9. Racial Difference

*

Satou's here. 'There is no rule in war and love', an acquaintance from my college days said so. 'You'll need faithfulness in love at least huh', so I thought when I was visiting the hospital room after the guy got himself hospitalized by his five girlfriends.

◇

"Here I go okay?"
"Okay, come at me!"
"Yes, please."

After enjoying the delicious dinner, I called Lulu and Arisa to the soundproofed laboratory.
Of course it's not for some dubious reason, I'm going to release them from their [Geass].
I have a first hand experience in removing demon lord Shizuka's [Geass] after all, this should be fine.
Demon lord Shizuka complained about the pain when I released her Geass, so this time I've given them some painkiller beforehand and chosen a place where they won't be heard even if they scream.

I pick [Geass] from the Skill Column and execute it.

"You don't need to be a slave. I permit the cancellation of the slave contract."

After ordering them so, some red thorn-like effect appeared around Arisa and Lulu and then snapped.
At the same time, Arisa and Lulu scream and cling to me.

So the painkiller really can't completely prevent it.

And then after about one hour--.

"Fuh~, it was far better than the pain from Reset, but it felt as if my nerve had been pulled if I didn't take the anesthetic."
"I-I am also f-fine now."

After wiping their tears with a handkerchief, I canceled their slavery contract in turns.

"It feels like the coiled headband on my head has been unfastened. My head feels light, but something feels unsatisfactory."

Arisa told her impression while swaying her head.

"You're right Arisa. It feels lonely to have the connection with Master severed--"

In the middle of her monologue, Lulu noticed my line of sight and reddened.
I wonder why?

"--But on the other hand, it's possible for me to become a bride now. I'll become a good woman enough for Master to be interested in during the promised four year!"

Lulu declared to me with a captivating smile.
Come to think of it, I remember promising Lulu, "I'll marry Lulu if you don't have a partner in five years" when we were in the journey back then.

"Ah! Lulu's unfair! Me too! I'll also become a woman that will make 1001 people from 1000 people turn their head in nine years!"
"Aren't there more people who turn their head than the ones that exist."

"You see, I mean that the unborn baby in the mother's stomach even turns his head."

I'm glad that Arisa can already joke around.
After patting their heads, I brough the two to the living room while giving some vague answers.

◇

"""CONGRATULATIONS!"""

When I told everyone in the living room that Arisa and Lulu have been released from their [Geass], they congratulated the two.

And then the brownies quietly push a cart inside.

"Ca~ke?"
"It's true nanodesu! Moreover it's the five stepped cuisuasu version nanodesu"

Pochi, you mean [Christmas].
The cake that the brownies have brought is a celebration cake I've prepared beforehand.
They put blue tea in front of everyone.

It's not their birthday, but we ignited as many candles as their ages, and then let them blew it.

"Tama wants to do it too~?"
"Po-Pochi too, she wants to blow candles too nodesu."
"Do."
"Master, wishing for swaying the fire."

"M-me too, I want to do it too desuwa."

In the end, it's not only the youth troupe and the embarrassed Lady Karina, but everyone blew the candles in turns.

I invited the brownies since they looked restless, but they refused since they were in the middle of their works.
I'll give them some mid-sized cakes with candles on top later.

◇

"Sheltering a demon lord?"
"Keeping a demon lord just because she's a beauty, aren't you too lustful."

After the celebration, I called Arisa and Liza and told them about me sheltering a demon lord.
I'm actually confining her in a green prison, but since that sounds like a crime, I said that it's for protection.

"She's certainly a beauty, but not at Lulu's level."
"In other words, she's at Sera and Karina-tan's level right?"

Wonder why, Arisa is awfully sharp.

"A 24 year old long earskin huh.... Don't tell me she's Aze-tan's substitute?"
"No, I don't think that at all."

I denied Arisa's suspicion with a serious face.

"Is that really so? I thought you moved on to her from Aze-tan."
"There's no way."

I shrugged my shoulder and denied Arisa's continued push.

"I mean, usually we'd have done a celebration like earlier in the elf village right?"
"That's--"

I couldn't reply to Arisa's reasonable words.

"Something happened right? Why don't you talk about it with onee-san?"

Arisa who's kneeling on the chair beside me tells me while patting my head as if persuading me.
I recall the time when I told Aze-san about my engagement with the princess about two weeks ago.

◇◇◇◇◆◇◇【Two Weeks Ago】◆◆◇◆◆◆◆

"Satou! Is the Royal Capital alright already?"
"Yes, I've settled the problems, I plan to move to the Labyrinth City in half a month."

While saying that I put some cakes from Royal Capital in front of Aze-san.
The nobles of the Royal Capital have been giving me box of cakes recently, so I've brought some carefully selected ones from among them.
I tell her about my new position after we're about done with the peaceful tea party.

"Actually I've been appointed to become a vice-minister of the Ministry of Tourism, and I'll be going on a journey with several of my old friends who will be acting as the attendants."

"Satou, you're amazing! To be successful as a minister this young!"

Aze-san you forgot the [Vice] part.

"So I'd like to bring new friends here, is it alright?"
"Of course! Satou can bring anyone he's accepted as many as he wants."

Aze-san easily permitted my request.
She's quick to decide as usual.

Lua-san who's acting as the watchdog and looking like she'll vomit sugar in the room also nodded.
I'll bring Zena-san and the others when I come here again next time.

Finally, I speak frankly about some slightly difficult thing to Aze-san.

"One of those attendants is the princess of Shiga Kingdom you see, and for some reason she's been pushed to me as my fiancee."

I look at Aze-san in the eyes and talk with a nuance that tells her that's it not my real intent.
However, unfortunately, my thought didn't seem to reach her.

"My! Satou's bride! Let me hold the baby when Satou's child is born okay."

Aze-san spoke of congratulatory words with higher voice pitch than usual.

--WHY？

"But but, is it only one? One is not--I mean, nobles of humankin take a lot of wives right? If it's Satou, you should be able to marry 100 brides and make 1000 babies! And then Satou's descendants can visit here for around 10.000 years! But don't stop with just the wives and the children, once in

10 days--"

Unlike her usual self, Aze-san continues talking like a machine-gun.

Since my marriage proposal had been rejected for three times already, I should be able to laugh off only this much, but Aze-san's words shocked me more than I thought, and I couldn't listen to most of the latter half of her talk.

◆◆◆◆◇◆◆【Present Time】◇◇◆◇◇◇◇

"Haaa--"

After listening to my story, Arisa put her hand on her forehead and let out a grand sigh.

"Are you stupiid? If you talked about that to someone who's less than a lover, it's obvious that she'd reply like that."
"Arisa--"
"I'm sorry Liza-san. I'll hear your scolding later, let me talk right now."

Liza was going to scold Arisa for calling me with [Anta(you)], but Arisa continued her words while putting her hands on my shoulders.

"And then, even though you always took your time to visit the elf village once in three days no matter how busy you were, afterward you never go there, never even send short reports through [Telephone] and even when she contacted you with Telephone, you only replied curtly right?"

She's quite well-informed--.

"Aze-tan consulted me with [World Phone] this noon. She was crying,

saying『Satou hates me now』you know?"

--Aze-san did?

"Master, it's presumptuous of me, but would you allow?"
"It's okay."

Liza unusually participated in love talk.
Naturally, Liza talks to me with a serious face without looking like she's making fun of it.

"Master is a human, Aialize-sama is a high elf."
"Yup, that's right."
"Human and high elf cannot make a child."
"I know."

I said it slightly displeased when the truth was directly presented to me.
I wonder what's Liza trying to say?

"It seems Master and Arisa's sense of value is different, but regardless of race, the general common sense in this continent is that breeding is a matter of the highest priority. The grace period for long-lived races is long, so it appears that there are times when they have relationship with other races, but even them always end up leaving descendants when they're of marriageable age."
"You're quite well-informed Liza-san."
"Yes, master Guya and ms. Poa sometimes talked about it when I was training in Boruenan."

I see, since it's from the elf master, this seems to be the common sense among the elves too.

"And, humans have short life. The period to leave descendants is also short--"

"In other words, regardless of feeling of love, it's a recommendation to marry people of the same race?"
"--That is right."

Arisa summarized Liza's words.

"Liza-san already said most of what I wanted to say, but stop getting into misunderstanding and being indecisive like some love comedy protagonist, quickly go to Aze-san and reconcile with her with a kiss."

Arisa motivated me with some gallant words.

"Wouldn't it better for Arisa if we break up?"

I said some bitter words to Arisa after getting irritated from feeling like an idiot.

There's a limit to being uncool.
I immediately regretted it the moment I said it, but Arisa laughed it off.

"Hahn! Don't make light of Arisa-chan! I don't intend to be a hyena who preys on people's misery! If I fall in love, I'd seize it with my own charm like a lion would!"

As always, I'm no match for Arisa serious mode.

"That sure is disadvantageous."
"I'm aware of it. But, I want to always be me! That's why--"

Arisa makes a charming smile unbefitting of her age.

"--You can push me down anytime you want."

She sent a clumsy wink to me.

The part where it fails in the end is very like Arisa too.

◇

"Good evening, Aze-san."

When I came to the tree house in the elf village with Unit Arrangement, Aze-san whose upper half of the body was sprawling on the table quickly raised her face.

"Zadou!"
"I-it has been a while."

With a teary voice, Aze-san's tackle-like intense embrace pushed me to the chair.
She's calling my name repeatedly while rubbing her face on my chest like a little child.

"Oh good, you've come at last."

Lua entered the room from the balcony while closing the window.

"It was terrible, Aze-sama kept saying, 『Satou won't come anymore』, 『Satou hates me now』."
"I'm sorry."

While brushing Aze-san's hair, I apologized to Lua-san.

"Does Aze-san love--"

This way of asking is cowardly.

I changed the way I spoke halfway through.

"I love Aze-san. There is no way I'll hate you. Does Aze-san love me?"
"Of course, I really love Satou."

--Really love. Really love. Really love.

The wonderful words become a refrain in my head.
It's enough as it is to keep me happy for three days, but I endure it and continue the talk.

"Then would you be my spouse?"
"T-that I can't do. Satou is a human, and I'm a high-elf."

So the bottleneck is the racial wall huh.

"Is it not possible with humans?"
"Un, not possible."

Aze-san flatly denied it.

"I mean, a human and a high elf can't make children together."
"Are children that important?"

I match it with Liza's story.

"Of course! Satou's children will absolutely makes the world prosperous. That's why Satou has to leave a lot of children. I mean that's the wish of Creator-sama."

Just like the monotheist of the former world, it seems the Creator that Aze-san mentioned ordered the gods dispatched to this world with, "Give birth, multiply, fill the land."

"Does that mean children from a woman other than Aze-san?"
"Eh? I mean.... I can't give birth to Satou's children. It can't be helped."

Good.
Apparently, it seems she's thinking it's good as long as I can leave children from the same race.

"Moreover, even though humans are short lived, their descendants resemble their ancestors. If you leave 1000 children, there might be one among them who's like Satou. After a long long time, wouldn't it be wonderful if I could meet a child who's exactly like Satou?"

Living at the same time as Aze-san who is 100 million year old is probably difficult even in a world with life extension methods like this.

However....

"That's why you were saying 100 brides isn't it."
"....Un, moreover even though I don't like it if Satou belongs to other woman, if Satou has a lot of wives, then I'll just be one of them and he won't be cold to me."

--How lovable.

Aze-san, can I push you down?

"I'll never be cold to you. Even if I really have 100 wives, I won't stop coming here. As long as Aze-san doesn't refuse it."

I make sure to mix the last words with a joking laugh so that it won't be misunderstood.

Still, I feel like a husband who has been permitted to have an affair by his wife.

I don't intend to use that permission though.

"I'm glad that you two seem to have made up."
"I'm sorry to have made Lua-san worry."

I apologized to Lua-san who was putting the tea cups.

◇

"--Marriage outlook of the elves?"
"Yes, for a future reference. Although it's fine if you don't want to talk about it."

I've learned that the trouble this time was because of the lack of mutual understanding, so I asked Lua-san about it at once.

"Right, even though it's quite different depending on the person, in general a pair who gets along with each other will be tied with『Conceiving Contract』after passing the lover period for about 100 years. It's what the humans refer as marriage. No one shares the same bed until the contract."

As expected of elves. To spend 100 years as pure lovers....

"Even after the contract has been made, most give birth to a child in several decades or at most 100 years, and then they raise that child as a couple until the child grows up. Once the child becomes independent, most couples conclude the contract and go back to be single. Most elves make two or three children in their lifetime, but there are rarely children who have the same parents."

I thought it was quite a dry relationship, but in actuality, they still spend

hundreds of years living together even after the contract is complete.
The reason why the elves have no family name but use "■■, the child of ●● and ▲▲" instead seems to be because of this custom.

"If a couple doesn't have a child in 1000 years, they'll be forcefully separated by the Clan Assembly, but that hasn't happened here in 5000 years."
"Isn't it about to become dangerous for Lua?"
"I'm young, so it's still quite alright. Yes, it is alright."

With a cool face, Lua-san answered Aze-san's interruption about her being unmarried.

I can see slight sweats from Lua-san's side profile, I wonder if it's just my imagination?

--Wait.

"Do high elves like Aze-san not get married in the million years time?
"I haven't you know? We high elves can make children among the same race, but the world tree will produce a new one when there's a vacant position, so there's no one who gets married besides the ones who are that whimsical."
"Is that so."

I sip the blue tea while feeling slightly relieved.

"I mean we high elves are to be the companion of the god when they don't get a consort."

Aze-san said the important matter casually.

"God's consort?"
"Un, the present god pantheon don't have enough power to form children

though, so the call for it is a story from the olden age I think."

Then, in order to prevent them from thinking some unnecessary thing, perhaps I should visit the male gods and chip off their power?

"Satou-san, you're having a scary smile you know?"
"I'm sorry, I was just thinking of something stupid."

I shake my head to drive out the dangerous thought, and then eat the portion of the celebration cake reserved for Aze-san and the others.

◇

When I asked about it to the demi-god mode Aze-san--.

『It is possible for a god to make a child with a high elf, but it has never happened in reality.』
"Why is that?"
『When a god creates a child, they need to give a piece of their divinity to the child. If the partner is not equal, the formed child won't be able to hold the parted power, and only weak power will dwell on the child.』

I see, looks like it needs preliminary handling indeed.
I'm slightly relieved that the needs to revolt against the god has disappeared.

For the occasion, I try asking something that's been slightly bothering me.

"Is it possible for a human to become a god or a high elf?"

Aze-san softly smiles hearing my question.

『Satou, I'm happy about the meaning of that question, but do not aim to become an Ascended God.』
"Why is that?"
『There have been ten of thousands heroes and sages who tried to be an Ascended God so far in this world, however, not even one reaches the god's throne.』
"Is it absolutely impossible?"

If it's really impossible then the term [Ascended God] shouldn't have existed.

『From the memory of the world when Creator-sama came, there were three people who reached the god's thrones. However, there are only three of them in the span of three billion years. I extremely advise against it for the transient human race.』

It's such a disadvantageous talk huh....

『Excepting the ones who are created as gods by gods of the higher order and demi-gods who are bestowed divinity, it's such a tall order that it can only be described with the cliched word of 'miracle'.』

Perhaps, I'll be like a demi-god if I let the [God's Fragment] to dwell in my body?
So I asked since that gave me hope.

『Right, it is said that a demon lord whose power runs wild and has lost its mortal reason is of the lowest seat of the demi-gods. But it is only a broken inferior good. Unfortunately, even though the [God's Fragment] itself contains the divinity, someone who let it dwells on their body won't have the divinity itself. Satou, please do not take the [God's Fragment] into yourself and goes on a rampage in desperation.』
"Yes, I do not have such a suicidal wish."

Because the marriage isn't the goal, but a start of my love life.
If it becomes an obstacle in my life after the marriage, then there's no meaning in that.

"There's no use of me asking the way to train to become an Ascended God right?"

Demi god mode Aze-san falls silent to my dumb question.

『I do not mind teaching you the way.』
"Are you sure!"

I jump to the unexpected words.
I'm restless if I say so myself.

『However, I have a condition.』
"I'll clear any condition!"

The me right now should be able to clear most difficult problems.

『Then, please make children from 100 girls of the same race.』
"--Eh?"
『Of course you can't force yourself on them okay?』
"Is that the condition?"
『That's right. If you aim for the godhood, first you have to accomplish your duty as a living being.』

Looks like it's not a joke, she's saying it seriously.

『And then, please splendidly reach the god's throne, and take me as your wife. When that happens, let's make a child with me as Satou's wife, just as you wish.』

I promised, "Absolutely", to the demi-god Aze-san who's smiling sublimely.

◇

Now then, I promised her "absolutely" earlier, but I don't intend to do the, "make children with 100 girls" prerequisite.
In the first place, it's rude for the woman who's going to be my partner.

I myself intend to seek the way to reach the god's throne during my free time.
I'm going to travel around the world anyway, I have a hunch that I'll probably find the way during the travel.

If by any chance I can't find it until the deadline for my marriage with the princess, there is no choice but to brace myself when that happens.
The Unknown little girl from before is probably willing to tell me, but I feel that it'll be the direct flag for the bad end, so I don't want to choose it.
Thus, I'm thinking of struggling with the frontal attack until the time limit.

Now then, the airship is going to arrive in the Royal Capital soon, why don't I read some books in the Forbidden Library as a change of pace?

14-10. Rumor about the Apostle

*

Satou's here. Fulfilling the promise exchanged during childhood is the standard of childhood friends, but I think remembering the promise you've made in your childhood is a tall order.

◇

"My! You're all Satou's new wives right?"

Even though I'm aware of Aze-san's real intention now, her innocent words weight down on my heart.
With the matter yesterday, today I've brought the princess, Sera, Lady Karina, Zena-san in addition to the usual members to the tree house in Boruenan.

"I am honored to be graced with your presence, your majesty sacred tree Aialize-sama. I am Satou's fiancee, Shistina the sixth princess of Shiga Kingdom."
"U-um.... You don't need to call me 'your majesty' okay?"

Aze-san is bewildered with the overwhelming princess's greeting.
In contrast, Hikaru is acting like she's been friend with Aze-san for 10 years after she greeted her.

"That's right, Aze looks like she doesn't like such a stiff greeting, be more friendly!"

Right now she's sitting beside Aze-san, joining shoulders while being overly familiar.

--Change with me, Hikaru.

"My name is Sera, granddaughter of Duke Oyugock of Shiga Kingdom."
"I'm Ka-Karina, daughter of Earl Muno desuwa."
"E-err, my name is Zena Marientail, I'm working as Satou-san's escort."

The three girls introduced themselves after the princess, but Zena-san's introduction is too modest.

"Zena-san is the benefactor of Liza and the others, and my first friend in Shiga Kingdom."

Thus, I followed up slightly.

"If she's Satou's friend, then she's also my friend. Let's get along well, Zena."
"Y-yes! I-I'm honored to."

As Aze-san rode on it spontaneously, Zena-san rigidly replied in monotone.

"Mwu, wrong wife."

Arisa is looking at them pleasingly, but Mia began to lightly hit Aze-san with sharp eyes.
It's not like she's serious, but leaving it is not good, so I collect Mia with [Magic Hand] and put her on my lap.
Tama who was originally sitting on my lap read the mood and smoothly slid to my side.

"Satou."
"Do you not like to be on my lap?"
"I don't hate it."

Mia is shaking her head, swinging her twintails making it hit the back of my head, but I'll receive this much contently.

"When I look at this, Aze-tan really does have the authority huh.
Everyone is rigid."

Arisa comments on the interaction between Aze-san and the others while giving me a cup of fruit water.

That serious mode will soon collapse--.

"Dehehe~"
"What's wrong Arisa?"

Arisa who's letting out some weird laugh pokes my shoulder with her index finger.

"I mean, I heard about it from Aze-tan."

I can guess what she heard, but it doesn't seem like Arisa is going to say it out loud.

"U-um, I've heard about the 100 wives talk too."

Lulu who showed up beside Arisa said the thing that Arisa couldn't say while smiling.
I see, so that's why she looks calm....

I intend to seek the way to ascend the godhood during the grace period, I don't have any plan to get 100 wives right now.
However, seeing Arisa and Lulu looking so happy, as expected I couldn't say it.

Thus, the first meeting of the princess and the others with Aze-san that

was filled with tension ended without any problem.
The princess and the others didn't seem like they could talk familiarly with Aze-san yet, but they're probably going to get used to it after seeing Tama and Pochi talk with her normally.

◇

"--Among the orphanages in the Royal Capital, Echigoya Firm has sent human resources and funds to nine of which aren't being supported by the Welfare Bureau. In addition, we've let the senior orphans to do odd jobs at the nearest Firm's workshops. The details regarding the downtown's [Hello Work] and the widows' home industry project are collected in these documents."

The day after we deepened our friendship at the elf village, I received a bundle of documents from Tifaliza.

It's quite thick. I've asked her about the summary, but I have to at least skim over it.

"Next, it's about the military unit deployed to subjugate the rebellion in Bishtal Dukedom. Three orders of knight from the kingdom military have liberated three cities from the rebel army, however...."

It seems the rebel army launched counteroffensives using monsters in order to drive them out of the cities, and got them to be on the verge of annihilation.
Only the order of knight that were accompanied by Jeril of Shiga Eight Swords and mithril explorers was able to successfully defend the city they were in, it seems they're the holding the war front at bay.

"Thus, Heim-dono of Shiga Eight Swords leading holy knights will be

deployed."
"Then we should deliver the magic sword that he ordered."

The magic sword that was requested half a month ago has long been completed, but since we put on the official stance, "Built-to-Order needs time", we suspended delivering it.

Heim's personal magic sword is a great sword type that's like the holy sword Durandal, and has [Eternal Blade] command word that can be used to regain its sharpness.
If the blade was just chipped, then it would work somehow, but as expected, the sword couldn't be restored if it was broken.
It's made from adamantite so I can guarantee the toughness.

Since only that much didn't have enough romance, I also put an abridged version of Lulu arm's acceleration magic circle on it.
If you stream magic power into the circuit, it's possible to do super-accelerated slashes or stabs with extreme swiftness.

When I let Pochi to try it, it demonstrated enough power to pierce through a shield made from lesser dragon's scales.
The magic sword is hard to handle, but Sir Heim should be able to master it.

The ominous-sounding Command Word which I got from Arisa was suggested to be changed, but it was too late since I had already put the function.

"Deliver it to Sir Heim before he departs."

I take out the magic sword Heim from the item box and lean it against the work desk.
Coming up the name was troublesome, so I named it by the user's name.

And then, the manager asked me when I had finished talking with Tifaliza.

"Kuro-sama, what would you like to do with the plot of land that has been given to Mitsukuni Duke House? For a mansion that's befitting of a duke house, then a request for the suitable architecture magic for a noble is--"
"I'll do that myself. I'll leave it to the manager to prepare the furniture and the garden."

I want to get some feedback of the experience I've learned from building the solitary island.

"Kuro-sama, if possible we'd like you to build the research facility for Ann and the others who have moved from the junction city."
"Okay. I'll make it a bit away from the the professor's research facility."

Ann whom Tifaliza mentioned is the one who managed alchemists in the junction city, they're the female compounders whom I named from ABCDE.
The matter about the fiend drug should be about to cool down soon, so I've made them to join Echigoya Firm.

"If something happens, get in touch with Mito with the information magic device okay."
"Understood."

The airship where Satou should be boarding is going to arrive this noon, so I'm thinking of completing Duke Mitsukuni's mansion until then.
I've already made the blueprint together with Hikaru and Arisa, so I just need to actualize it.

"Ell-sama, today Kuro-sama is going to come here right--Uwah Kuro-sama!"
"Calm down Aoi. Kuro-sama, please excuse us. Aoi would like to suggest a

new business, would you be willing to lend us your time?"

I'd like to quickly construct the duke mansion, but I endure it for a bit and accept Aoi's new business presentation.

"--I see, reformable undergarments made of fiber that can contract and expand with magic power huh."
"Yes, please do tell me if Kuro-sama knows any good material with good cost to performance ratio."

There are many material that can expand with magic power, but materials from plant-type monster deteriorate fast, so there are many which need extra cost to preserve them.
If the deterioration can be ignored, there's something like the [Crawling Ivy] that's used in making traps, but you can't use it for undergarments.
If metal is fine, then the material used for the princess and the others' armor can be used, but that one is too costly even for a noble.

After pondering for a bit, I recalled the thing I heard from Arisa before.

"The magic cloth taught in the magic school should have such a property. Ask the manager to arrange the related book."
"Understood."

A large scale facility will be needed for manufacturing magic cloth, but we should be able to do it with the workshop facilities that Echigoya Firm has bought.
I decided to pretend that I didn't hear Aoi boy saying, "Now we can make stockings."
It seems he has quite the profound taste.

◇

"Fumu, this much should be okay I think?"

When I had finished making the exterior of Duke Mitsukuni mansion, the small airship that Satou should have ridden arrived on the neighboring Earl Muno's Mansion.

I wanted to do the interior decoration too, but I can just do it after finishing my official business later.

After changing to noble clothes in the solitary island palace, I enter the gate to the small airship.

"Master! I saw it from the airship, was it alright do such a conspicuous thing like that?"
"Yeah, it doesn't matter. Kuro's and Nanashi's absurdities are widely known in the royal capital after all. That much is no problem."

Arisa asked about the magical construction of Duke Mitsukuni mansion, so I told her my opinion.
Unlike Satou, Nanashi and Kuro who have Shiga Kingdom backing them should have no opposition in wielding overwhelming power.
After showing that much magic, rather than trying to oppose Duke Mitsukuni house, people probably would try to gain their grace instead.
It should go well if I just leave the manager to deal with the aftermath.

"Leaving that aside, I'm going to meet with the prime minister, what's everyone's plan?"
"Mia and I are going to the library in the magic school."
"Nn, investigation."

Arisa and Mia answered my question first.

"I'd like to go with Arisa and Mia-sama, is it alright?"

"Yes, I don't mind. I can report to the prime minister alone."
"Then I'll go with them as a guard."

The princess is going with the library group, and Zena-san will be guarding them.

"Pochi wants to play in the knight school."
"Tama too~?"
"Okay. Don't make too much racket okay."
"Yes nanodesu."
"Aye~"
"Then I will accompany the two."
"Please, Liza."

Looks like the beast girls want to meet their friends in the knight school of the royal academy.
I was slightly worried with just Tama and Pochi, so I was glad that Liza offered to accompany them.

"Master, I want to go to the childhood school so I declare."

It seems Nana wants to visit Shiro and Crow's class.
She'll be happy with a lot of the young organisms there.

The people who aren't here, Lulu is currently testing the menu for the cooking contest in the solitary island palace, while Lady Karina is working hard at her battle training against the combat golems in the beach of the solitary island palace.

Exchanging places with us who have arrived in the royal capital, Hikaru has gone to Fujisan mountains where the heavenly dragons and the others are.
I have asked Hikaru to check the library in the heavenly dragon shrine.

"It wouldn't be good for a vice minister if he was without his attendants, so I'd go with Satou-san to the Royal Castle."

Sera whom I thought would be going to the Tenion Temple declared so. For some reason, the princess and Zena-san who heard that had [Oh no!] expressions on their face, but I'm only going to report the result of the small airship's test flight to the prime minister, so there's no need to regret anything like that.

"Then, let us go Satou-san."

Together with Sera who was strangely cheerful, I got on the called carriage from Pendragon Mansion to the Royal Castle.

◇

"--Threatening mood is spread among the group of small countries to the east. Right now, we cannot confirm whether any demon is rampaging there, but someone wearing white vestment calling themselves [God's Apostle] has been making several incidents in the small countries."

While sipping the tea made from labyrinth-sourced moss, I listen about the situation at the east where I'm planning to go.
Before we got to this story, he had told me about other stories like the destruction of the demon lord and the war between Holy State Parion and its three neighboring countries.

"Is there anything in common between the incident places?"
"There is nothing that suggests it."

In addition to the [Priest massacre incident] that I've heard from the marchioness in the labyrinth city Selbira, the apostle seems to be doing

actions with unknown purpose like destroying the royal villas of the small countries, or annihilating the mercenary groups who were wandering on the strife-laden lands of the small countries.

"The royal research institute and theologians of the temples think that the self-proclaimed apostle may be using the earth magic [Stone to Salt] or the ritual holy magic [Divine Retribution] to change people and building into salt."

Either of the magic has a long chant, and I can sense the magic wave from the sign, so it should not be possible to do a surprise attack on me. There might be other people that can use ritual magic chantlessly like me though, so I should think of the countermeasure as an insurance.

I also asked the prime minister the way to get in touch with the spies who have infiltrated the countries I will be traveling to.

After leaving the royal castle, Sera and I went around to the royal research institute and met the theologians whom the prime minister referred to gather information.
At the royal research institute we found out that the ritual magic needs some prerequisites like offerings, stars lining up and such, and while we were at it, I also got them to show the latest research, permanent defensive magic.
Leaving aside the former, the latter is extremely helpful, so I presented them some scarce materials needed for their research as the compensation.

We didn't get any new information from each temples we visited afterward, but we were referred to a person called heretic theologian when I donated 10 gold coins to the Zaikuon temple.

We were referred to the edge of the slum in the downtown.
The one we meet is an old woman who has the alias of [Heretic

Theologian] that doesn't suit her.

"--It might be a skill used by the demon god's apostle called『Calamity (Clay Merry)』."

The old woman said some disturbing things while snacking on the tea cake I brought.
Please stop with the dangerous words like "demon god's apostle."

"Calamity?"
"Yes, I've only ever seen it in an ancient Furu empire document, it's said that anything touched by the hand changes into salt pillar."

Just touching means out, the hurdle is too high.
I have to think of the way to defend against it for my companion.

"Is there no way to prevent it?"
"The demon god's apostle excessively fears dragons, so they absolutely won't get near someone who has the presence of a dragon."

I got an unexpected solution when I asked while not expecting anything.
I should not blindly believe it, but we're lucky if it has any effect, I'll create accessories made of the heavenly dragon's and the black dragon Heiron's scales and give it to everyone.
Maybe I should try using the dragon scales to make some dye?
Using the fiber in the scales to create cloth might also be a good idea.

Later, I tried talking to the reincarnated people in the labyrinth's lower layer, but they never met this [Demon God's Apostle].
Corpse had met Urion's apostle, while Yuika had met Garleon's apostle, but they never saw any ritual magic that could change people into salt.
According to Corpse and Yuika, the apostles are only about as strong as a mid demon to less than a greater demon, they don't have Unique Skill, their magic are about the same as the demon and they need to chant to

use it, so there should be no need for us to be that nervous.

◇

"--Zena-san."

Late at night that day, I called to Zena-san who was practicing magic in the beach of the solitary island palace.
Her power is far superior than when she was in the Seryuu city back then.

"Satou-san, were the sounds of my magic too noisy?"
"No, not at all."

I hand over a cup of fruit water to Zena-san who's gasping from the excessive magic usage.
Next, I take out a table on the beach.

"I've completed the present for Zena-san, so I've come to deliver it."
"--Present?"

I put magic books and several magic tools on the table.

"I-is this possibly the [Book of Wind] of the [Jib Cloud Magic Dictionary]?"
"Yes, it's something that Zena-san will need from now on. This thin book over here has selected spells of the flight magic and the explanation to control them."

This book is my own work.

"--Flight magic?!"

Hearing me, Zena-san raises her face like it was flicked.

"Yes, the Zena-san right now should be able to use it."
"W-with flight magic I--"
"Yes, once you're able to fly freely in the sky, we have to fulfill our promise don't we."

We exchanged a promise to take an [Aerial Date] once Zena-san has learned flight magic when we were in Seryuu City.

"So you remember it, Satou-san."
"Of course."

Overwhelmed with emotion, Zena-san wraps her delicate hands on mine. Did she think that I completely forget about it?

After staring at each other for a while, Zena-san comes to her sense, separates her hands and jumps back.

"I-I'm sorry."

While her cheeks are reddening, she opens the thin book as if varnishing over it.

"There are three spells aren't there."

Zena-san muttered while turning the thin book's pages.

This book has [Practice Fly], [Automatic Fly] and [Fly] spells.

"The written spells have different degree of difficulty, so you should start with the『Practice Fly』. I'll do it with you together if you need a model."

I recite the [Practice Fly] spell.

"This magic can only do ascending, descending, advancing, and turning left and right. It's a magic to do floating movement rather than for flying like a bird."

If I talked with Arisa, I'd call it a magic that move like a drone, rather, I can immediately imagine it.

"I've mixed in the wind magic『Air Float』function so you don't have to worry about falling, please get used to flying with this magic."
"Y-yes! I'll do my best."

Zena-san looks eager while having a posture like she'll fall forward.

"These magic tools are precautions so you won't get hurt during the flying magic practice. Please be sure to wear it during your practice okay."

They're for absorbing impact in case of falls.
I've put the mechanism in Lulu's and Nana's equipment, so it has the stamp of approval.

"W-wearing this, is it...."

Zena-san picks up a magic tool and blushes, perhaps because it looks like a half-transparent leotard.

"I-It's embarrassing, but since it's clothes that Sa-Satou-san has made...."

--Embarrassing?

Apparently, Zena-san has misunderstood.

"It's thin, so please wear it between your underwear and your clothes."
"Th-that's right isn't it. A-ahaha, oh me--"

Zena-san cleared the misunderstanding with my follow up, but she tries to varnish over it with cheeks that are even redder than before.

"I-I'm going for a bit!"

It seems she couldn't bear her embarrassment anymore, Zena-san ran away from the beach after declaring so.
Due to her level up, her physical ability seems to have risen favorably well.

I send the equipment and magic books to Zena-san's room with [Teleport an Object], and leave a message ball for Zena-san in this place.
She'll be embarrassed even if I wait here after all.

◇

"--Hero, how's your situation?"

After separating from Zena-san, I contacted the hero's party with the telecommunication equipment in Echigoya Firm.
This time, it's the hero himself instead of the house-watching attendant after a long while.

『Yo Nanashi, looks like you're doing well there.』
"Well yeah. I'm good at finding enemies you see. Should I go help you if you need help in searching?"
『Ah your timing is bad. The engineers of the Weasel Empire have agreed to provide us a magic tool for tracking the demon lord you see. We asked it from our side, so we can't tell them we don't need it now.』
"I see."

--Oops, I'm too late huh.

『Sorry 'bout it. When we were fighting, the demon lord itself felt far weaker than the yellow bastard we fought in Oyugock city, so I'll show you that we can defeat it this time.』

Apparently, every time they were about to defeat it, the demon lord escaped by using a dummy as a scapegoat.

"Then I'll be waiting for good news in the next communication."
『Yeah! I'm not worthy of Saga Empire's hero if I can't defeat at least one demon lord!』

He's burdening the dignity of Saga Empire and God Parion's prestige, so it seems he's a bit eager.

"Hero, 『Cherish your life』 okay."

I sent a famous words from a super popular game to the hero.
<TLN: One of Dragon Quest's AI tactics, I think it's localized as "Focus on Healing".>

『I know. Not just me, I'll show you that I'll go back without missing anyone!』
"Un, I believe Hayato can do it."

I returned words of encouragement to Hayato's powerful words, and then we finished the regular communication.

◇

In the middle of the night, I made bracelets for everyone using the

beautiful heavenly dragon's scales.
It'd be boring if they all looked the same, so I put different images as the carved seals on the plate part of the bracelets.

These equipment are countermeasures against the [Demon God's Apostle], so I've not put magic circuit on it.
For that, I've completed the simpler version of Raka's automatic defense system which is still under development, and I'm now thinking of putting space magic into it.

The next morning, my small airship departs from the Royal Capital, I choose the course that goes to Oyugock Dukedom through coastlands in marquis Ganika territory.
We're supposed to arrive in marquis Ganika's territory before noon, so we should be able to visit Capital of Ganika in the evening.

It's been awhile since we visit a new city, let's treat ourselves to a sightseeing tour together with everyone!

14-11. The Territory of Marquis Ganika

*

Satou's here. There is an unexpectedly large amount of omens of fall. But those many omens get overlooked until the fall.

◇

"Dried fish~?"
"They're aall fish nanodesu."

I brought Tama and Pochi along to one of the big fishing villages in Marquis Ganika's territory.
We came to this village to search for fish as presents for people who live in the mountain regions.

This territory of Marquis Ganika is in the middle of the air lane that connects the Royal Capital and the territory of Duke Oyugock, it's an elongated shaped territory that mostly faces the sea.

"Merchant-sama, would you buy our product nya?"

When we were walking along the dried fish racks toward the place where there was a lot of people, a girl with strange end word talked to me.
She's a catkin like Tama. Unlike Tama, her hair and eyes look bad, but it doesn't seem like she has an ill intention against us.

It's annoying to correct her that I'm a noble, so I decide to continue the talk while leaving her misunderstanding alone.

"You really saved me nya. We've been getting a whole lot of fish for a half of month, we couldn't eat them all, so we had to turn them into dried fish

nya. Yet the usual merchants said, 'every fishing village in the territory is getting a good haul, the price has fallen', they were reluctant to buy them, it was troubling nya."

When I asked about the dried fish's price, it was bizarrely cheap at only 5% of the price in the Royal Capital, so I bought a lot as recommended.
This girl seems to be the boss of this village, catkins and gillkins people with big builds carry the baggage one after another when the girl orders them.

"Are you only going to buy the dried fish nya? We also have dried abalones and beautiful shell cratfs you nyaow?"

The shrewd catkin girl tried to sell some expensive products.
The shell crafts' craftsmanship were not quite that good, but since I heard that they were the handiworks of widows and girls from poor houses, I decided to buy them all as they weren't that much anyway.
I can just sell them in the inland branch offices of Echigoya Firm.

Another fisherman-like gillkin came to sell some fresh mackerel-like fish, so I brought a basketful of them.

When I bought one, more fishermen came to me one after another to try to sell their fish.
It seems the story about big haul is true.

"Octopus~?"
"The octopus outside the labyrinth are small nodesu."

Tama and Pochi who saw octopus among the seafood tilted their heads in puzzlement.
Of course they're small compared to the Dungeon Octopus that are more than 10 meter big in the labyrinth.
Even those are small compared to the Kraken that live in the open sea

though.

While having that exchange, Tama and Pochi stuff the products that we've bought to their magic bags.

"Work~ work~"
"Pochi will work hard too nodesu."
"Magic bag nya! As expected of a great merchant, they're different nya!"

The catkin girl made a fuss when she saw that.
There were many merchants who have magic bags in the Royal Capital, but there's probably no peddlers going around fishing villages who have one, no wonder it's rare.

Then, a catkin old man wearing worn-out clothes appeared.
Perhaps it's just my imagination, but the surrounding people's eyes are steep.

"Hear me! Everyone! This big haul is an omen of the undersea people from the deep sea attacking! We have to abandon the seaside and run away to the mountain now!"

--Undersea people.

Without caring the atmosphere around, the old man makes his speech while scowling at the sea.
I tried searching the sea map just in case, but I couldn't find the thing called undersea people. Of course, I've also searched the seas outside the territory.
There was a lot of monsters, but that was just the usual so I ignored it.

"Bemud-jiisan, we have a customer right now nya. Talk your nonsense to your pet dog in your house nya."

Once the catkin girl did that, the villagers around also sneered at the old man.

U~n, I hate this kind of mood.
I urge the catkin girl to settle the payment, and lead the villagers' interest from the old man to me.

"Excuse me, how'd you like to be paid, with cash or jewels?"
"Of course cash nya! It'd be good if it's in copper coins so we can distribute it to everyone nya."

Even though we bought so much, I only had to pay with 73 copper coins.
I've been buying things with gold coins so far, so this feels strange.
The villagers who saw the piled up copper coins made a fuss, "We're having a feast today!"

We were invited too, but since we needed to prepare the lunch, we refused.

◇

The thing that the old man earlier talked about caught my interest so I moved to the [Return Teleport] point outside the territory of Marquis Ganika and re-executed [All Map Exploration], but there was no new information besides the fact that there was an outbreak of monsters called Sea Orc that I saw for the first time in the bottom of the sea of the continental shelf.
I think being called 'deep sea' even though they're living in the continental shelf is a bit wrong, but I shouldn't mind the trivial.
<TLN: The sea orc's japanese name has "Deep Sea" on it, but the author only calls it "Sea Orc" as the "official" English name/katakana.>

For the time being, I pull one of the Sea Orcs with space magic and check it.

These Sea Orcs are basically a pig with fins as their limbs, and there's a swordfish-like horn on their forehead. Their average level is level 3, they're extremely weak. It seems there are various sub-species just like Demi-goblins.

There is a lot of them, but since they're so weak that the monsters in the sea could trample them down, they probably won't even get to the ground what's with the sea several kilometers around them containing many powerful monsters for them.

Right, there's no way that a world crisis will always be around the corner.

"Welcome back, Master."
"I'm back."

When I got back to the small airship, a brownie in flight uniform greeted me.
Even though this ship can be left unmanned, I let brownies who wish for it to handle the ship during the normal cruises in turns.

This flight uniformed brownie is an airship maniac even among those brownies, he's doing his duty while wearing handmade goggles and flight uniform.
Moreover, it seems he likes to steer the ship with the wheel on the upper deck that's exposed to the strong wind and sunlight instead of the one in the bridge.

Once the brownie got back to the steering wheel, I turned on the anti-wind magic on the rear deck, took out beach chairs from the Storage, and began to check the information in the tourist book and the one I got from the map.

This territory of Marquis Ganika is a long territory that's endowed with 1000 kilometer long coastline extending from the east to the west, there's

only a few inhabitable area as it has four cities, seven towns and many villages around them.
There are inlets protected with barrier pillars every 40-50 kilometer of the coastline to prevent monsters from entering, they're used as evacuation sites for ships that are cruising on the coast.
It seems the fee for entering these inlets are the source of income for the territory of Marquis Ganika.
Looking at the map, it seems most of the villages in the territory are located along these safe inlets.

Looking things with the Senrigan (Extra Clairvoyance) magic, the big haul isn't only happening in the village earlier, but it's a common situation among the villages and towns in the territory.
This [Senrigan (Extra Clairvoyance)] is an advanced version of [Clairvoyance] magic, I can view anywhere on the map with it.

I contact Echigoya Firm's Manager through Telephone magic.

『Yes, Elterina speaking.』
"Manager, do you know about the big haul phenomenon in the territory of Marquis Ganika?"
『--Yes, we are aware of it. We have received reports pertaining it from the branch offices in the marquis territory.』

Tifaliza who heard about it from the manager recheck the report once again.
According to the report, the haul is 20% better than the last year.

"It seems the haul is exploding even more in the actual site than the report suggests."
『Should we instruct the branch offices to buy more?』
"Yeah, if it's something that can be preserved dry, then you can buy as many as you like as long as it's not higher priced than the conventional market price."

『Understood.』

I'm glad that she's quick to handle things, but I feel a bit lonely that she doesn't ask about the reason or the storage site.
The preserved foods that we'll buy can be featured on the branch offices in the inland.

◇

The airship that's arrived in the capital of Marquis Ganika's territory is met by the next marquis and the chief nobles.
This is probably because I'm accompanied by Princess Shistina.

Since this is our first city, I'd have liked to tour it with everyone, but we had to participate in the tea party sponsored by the marchioness until the evening banquet.

I gave the usual snack sets and magic-made glassworks as the souvenirs.
Since Marquis Ganika is a sailor, I had prepared a glasswork modeled after big caravel ship.
It was not hard to do since I only imitated the real thing. I picked it since I thought it'd probably look better than some glass sword.

"Oh! I have never seen such a meticulous glasswork even in Oyugock Dukedom. Wonderful! Truly a wonderful item! With such an item, I cannot return the favor without giving back our heirloom, the Sea King Five-Pronged Spear or the Twin Sea Dragon Wand."

It seems Marquis Ganika really liked it, he told a joke that made his wife and retainers to lift their eyes.

According to the tourist book, the Sea King Five-Pronged Spear that he

mentioned seems to have the effect of flinching the widely distributed sea-type monsters in addition to being effective against them, so it's an indispensable item for the fleet.

The Twin Sea Dragon Wand is a magic wand that acts as auxiliary for water magic, it's a key item for using the forbidden water magic [Divine Tidal Wave].
There's no magician that can use forbidden magic in the territory of Marquis Ganika but there's a lot of local water magicians here, so the item is an object of yearning in the territory.

"--Dear?"
"It's a joke of course. I will give my youngest daughter to the Viscount."
"Your excellency, if you joke too much, the snake king will change to the dragon king you know?"
"Princess Shistina is well-informed with our tradition. You guys, learn from her highness--"

I was hesitant what to say back to the marquis who was reminded by his first wife, but as usual the princess dealt with it before I could talk.
The 'you guys' that the marquis said are probably the daughters of his relatives who are in this place.

"Viscount-sama, what kind of place is the labyrinth?"
"Her highness, what kind of music is in fad in the royal capital?"
"Sera-sama, I will enter the temple apprenticeship next year. Would you tell me about the temple?"

When the marquis withdrew for governmental affair, the girls let out a barrage of questions like surging waves.
Most of them are asking the princess but since the princess has no interest in music or clothes that are in fad, they change the target to me so I don't even have time to drink the tea.

Every girl looks so happy, but there's one with a gloomy face.

She's not the marquis's daughter, but his niece, a daughter of an earl. She's 15 year old, her physique is good and her shoulder-length hair leaves a lively impression. Her level is 10, her skills are [Water Magic], [Ship Handling], and [Etiquette].

"Nereina-sama, are the sweets not to your liking?"
"No, they're wonderful sweets that I've never tasted before."

I tried to talk with the earl's daughter in question, but since her nuance felt like she was annoyed, I stopped trying to talk with her in the tea party.

◇

After the banquet, I've got to enjoy some rum recommended by Marquis Ganika and liquor bragged by the upper nobles in a salon that's separated by gender. It seems there's a lot of heavy drinker nobles in this territory.

When I was sobering up on the balcony while feeling the wind, my Attentive Ears skill picked up a conversation between two women.

"Nereina, are the undersea people really going to attack from the bottom of the sea?"
"My lady.... I do not know either."

Apparently, it's a conversation between the earl daughter Nereina and the eldest daughter of the marquis.

"However, as checked by the retainers, there are many stories where fish and monsters that have never been before being sighted among the

populace. Moreover, the fleet of Baron Donsuden that should have arrived last month hasn't arrived even now."
"Something might be happening beyond the sea--"

The marquis daughter muttered a sigh like it was not her problem hearing the fretting Miss Nereina.

Fumu, distribution huh.... I didn't check that.
I saw it on the map, but since I didn't know the previous information, I don't really know.

It seems interesting, maybe I should check it out a bit.

"--Tama."
"You called~?"

I didn't think that she would really come.

"Was the dinner good?"
"Ganika Shrimp was delicious~"

Tama who's in dress lets out a smile.
For today's banquet, I went with not only the princess but everyone including the beastkin girls.

"I see, I'd like you to do a little something--"
"Don't worry be happy~?"

A while after Tama had disappeared, several people came to the balcony.
I asked Tama to call Liza, Pochi, Nana, and Zena-san here.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you during the pleasant banquet, but I'd like you to gather some information in the town."
"Understood, Master. Awaiting your order."

Liza consented to my sudden request.
I want to know whether the conversation earlier is true.

"I'd like you to gather information from the sailors in the town's bar."
"Understood."
"Aye aye~"
"Roger nanodesu."
"Yes, Master."
"I-I'll do my best!"

Liza with Zena-san, Pochi with Nana, I open a gate to the nearby harbor for them to go investigate in groups.
Of course, they've changed to plain clothes.

I felt a bit hesitant sending them to harbor bar filled with rowdy people inside, but these girls should be able to repel some sexually harassing drunkards now. I hope they're careful not to overdo it at least.

"What about Tama~?"
"Tama has a special mission."
"Nin nin~"

Ninja has ninja's work to do.

"Leaving us behind, I can't let that happen!"
"Nn, same."

After Tama disappeared, Arisa and Mia appeared through teleportation.

"I've never intended to leave you behind. Arisa is to gather intelligence from Miss Nereina together with Sera, Mia is going with me to intrude the library and check the old documents there."

I should ask the marquis directly after checking for a bit.

"Eh~, I want to go with Master too."
"Then once Sera's investigation is over, ,contact me with [Telephone] and I'll summon you here."
"Can't be helped. Since Arisa-chan is a nice woman, I'll give you an okay."

It'd have left a good impression if she didn't click and wink in the end....

◇

"Mia, please check the books with chains over there. I'll look them all from the other side in turns."
"Nn, okay."

Once we arrived in the dark library through space magic, we immediately began the investigation.
I granted Mia with the dark magic's [Night Vision].

Looking up the book straightforwardly would be troublesome, so I put the books along with the shelves into my Storage and then searched the keywords [Undersea People], [Ravine], and [Disaster].
Even though I had checked half of the ten shelves, I couldn't find anything that matched them.

『Master, we've completed the inquiry.』
"Okay, I'll summon you here."

Sera is still with Miss Nereina and the marquis's daughters, so I only summon Arisa.

"Sera is still talking with Nee-tan and the others, so she stayed behind.

Undersea people sounds like the prophecies of Nostradamus doesn't it.
According to the marquis's daughters, there wasn't any story about whether the undersea people really attacked in the history books of the marquis house."

I see, it seems to be a so-called folklore huh.
According to the four people who investigated the town, one of the rumor circulating among the drunkard seems to be [Undersea people are attacking].

According to Tama who investigated the fishing village, fish that were usually only seen in the offshore getting caught on coastal waters, and a lot of cases where strong monsters rampaging on the coast seem to be true.

"Found."

Mia muttered.
The words [Undersea people] are certainly on the place where her fingers are pointing.

◇

"Hey, do they really exist?"
"Who knows, they may be if the thing written in that book is true."

I shrug my shoulder to Arisa's question.

These are written in the book that Mia found--.

『The ground shook like it was the beginning of the world continued on, people profited from the dried up sea taking the sea products by hands,

killing sea monsters that couldn't move on the ground, getting their hands on seemingly inexhaustible magic cores.』

The tide abating after an earthquake happened in my former world too.

『Such blessings didn't last long, from beyond the parched sea as the abominable inhabitants of the undersea city Nenerie came attacking. Without even getting the chance to name the undersea people, the people of the fishing villages were bitten from the head to toe, devoured.』

I feel that it's an allegory of tsunami, but I also feel that it's a written work by a reincarnated person who's into Ctulhu myth.

『However, the cruelty of the undersea people didn't last long. The king of Ganika that was bestowed the Sea King Five-pronged Spear from the god drove away the undersea people from the shore, the queen carrying the Twin Sea Dragon Wand pushed away the undersea people to beyond the ravine.』

It seems the territory of Marquis Ganika was an independent kingdom in old days.
I'd probably have to find the Sea King Five-Pronged Spear and the Twin Sea Dragon Long Wand and avert the crisis if this were an RPG, but since it's troublesome, I won't ask the marquis to lend them to me.

--With that information, I came to the sky above the place where the Sea Orcs are.

Written in the book that Mia found, during that time, there was a large quantity of eaten corpses of Sea Orcs getting washed ashore.
I've only brought Arisa here after some fierce rock-paper-scissor matches.

"Then, let's go."

I pick [Sea Divide] from the Magic Column and execute it.
The MP consumption is high for an advanced magic.

The seawater got pushed aside, and a perpendicular water hole several kilometer big in radius appeared.

"Uoooo, are you some kind of prophet!"

Arisa who's surprised hugs my head.
It seems she doesn't have enough leeway to sexually harass me today.

Ignoring the group of Sea Orcs who are floundering on the dried bottom of the sea, I move with Sky Drive.
Since I am the point of the Sea Divide, the divided part moves with me.

Sometimes there were tasty looking level 30 and above monsters scattered about, Arisa defeated them with her space magic.
Maybe I should have brought Mia who needs more experience points to level up.

After a while, we met a vertical cliff that looked like an ocean trench.
When we descended a bit, the radar's scope narrowed down. The trench seems to be of another map.

After executing All Map Exploration from the magic column, I see that the bottom of the trench is the [Undersea City of Nenerie].
Moreover, there are several tens of thousands of monsters called [Neroid] inside the city. <TLN: Yes, Neroid, not Nereid.>
Around 30% of those monsters have the condition of [Hunger] or [Starvation].

Perhaps in the near future, these Neroids would attack the group of Sea Orcs and might even reach the shore while chasing after them.

However, that will never happen.

Because--.

◇

"It's nice isn't it, finding another place to level up besides the labyrinth."
"That's right. They're too weak for Arisa and the others, but they should be good matches for Zena-san and the others' training."

I've completely enclosed them with space magic, so the Neroids won't be able to escape from the undersea city.
We tried to get in contact with them since they're called [Undersea People] for once even though they're monsters, but since they came attacking us with the intention to eat even without looking at us, we changed the objective to annihilation.
I also didn't get language skill, it didn't seem like we could converse.

Getting to tour and explore the undersea city while leveling up Zena-san and the others' levels is quite the bargain.
Along the way, I threw Sea Orcs that Arisa had defeated and unappetizing insect type monsters, so they shouldn't be annihilated due to starvation.

Nothing's happening in the world today too--.

There's no way that world crisis happens often.

SS: The Territory of Marquis Ganika, Later

*

"--This is, an old document?"
"Yes, it's in the castle's library, look at this Nereina."
"Is it a modern translation?"

Five days after Princess Shistina visited, I was called by the young lady to the castle.

"If this is true--"
"Yes, it should be an evidence of the undersea people's existence."

A servant of the marquis house, most likely someone of talent that could read ancient documents must have found it.
If we show this to marquis-sama, we might be able to persuade or even push marquis-sama to launch a full-scale investigation.

I feel clear like a small bird that sees the morning sun after a long while.

◇

"Excuse me!"

The young lady and I came to the work room of Marquis-sama.
Normally we would have been stopped along the way, but today there wasn't anyone stopping us. It's strange.

This must be my lucky day.

"That was quick."

--Eh?

I exchanged looks with the young lady hearing unexpected words from Marquis-sama.

"This girl is the one who has promptly raised the warning about the matter this time, she's Nereina-dono."

A young woman with golden hair cut to her shoulders stands up from the sofa in front of Marquis-sama.

She's wearing expensive looking clothes and graceful jewels as the accessories.
There's no mistake that she's an upper noblewoman, moreover, she must be a noble from the Royal Capital.

"She's Sala of Echigoya Firm."

--A merchant?

She looks like a noble no matter how you look at it right?

"Marquis-sama. Today I've come as a retainer of Duke Mitsukuni."
"So you were."

Duke Mitsukuni.... That famous Duke Mitsukuni from the time of Ancestor King-sama's world reformation!

While still feeling surprised we exchanged greetings with the woman who looks like she was born in a noble house.

"Now then, regarding the matter of undersea people---"
"It's true! Undersea people do exist!"

I impatiently interrupted Sala-sama.
It's already far more severe than impoliteness. If this keeps up, it won't

end up with just scolding, I might be sent to my parent house's reflection room.
Now that it has come to this, I prepare myself.

"I-if you look at this book, the existence of undersea people is--"
"There is no need."

It seems Sala-sama was angered with the thing earlier, she flatly shut me down.

"Sala-sama, would you please listen to Nereina."
"Understood. Let it be after you hear me."

Thanks to the young lady, Sala-sama somehow agreed to take the time.
As expected of young lady! She's dependable.

After clearing her throat, Sala-sama starts to talk.

"After hearing the rumor about the undersea people, hero Nanashi-sama had gone and investigated it and found the undersea city, Nenerie, he judged that the undersea people (Neroids) in the actual site were warlike monsters after he got in contact with them and sealed the site with magic. After further investigation, he found the descendants of the ancient undersea people (Elder Neroids) living a primitive live on a solitary island near Nenerie, and after gathering the documents in the community, he identified that they were former citizens of the undersea city Nenerie."

Umm, isn't it just too fast?
We only started to perceive the abnormal situations half a month ago....

"Is it possible to use the undersea city?"
"It is not. The teleport gate which is the mean to go to the city has been broken, and unless you are like Hero Nanashi-sama who can stand high

pressure, it is not possible to approach it."
"Is that so...."

The conversation that's happening between Marquis-sama and Sala-sama feels like a tale from some faraway country.

"--Nereina!"

Called by the young lady, my thought that was flown far away came back.

"I'm sorry."
"It is fine, accept this Nereina. It's a reward from His Majesty."

It's a gorgeous necklace that can be said to be luxurious even for a daughter of an earl house.
Moreover, there's a piece of highest grade Shiga Pongee under it.

Furthermore! There's even a letter of commendation from His Majesty!

"Accept them."
"I will respectfully accept."

I received the letter of commendation and the reward with proud feeling.

Of course, the young lady also received them too.
Because this is an achievement of us both.

"Then, I'll be going around to each village in the territory."
"--Villages?"

I inadvertently asked the question after hearing Sala-sama's unexpected words.
Villages are places where commoners and officials go, as nobles, we've never set foot in them.

"Yes, besides young ladies, there are storytellers who had warned about the undersea people in every village, so I'll be going to reward them too."
"Is it alright for me to go too?"
"Yes, if Nereina wishes for it."

'I promised to listen to your story after all', Sala-sama teased me.
I felt that my face reddened up to my ears, but right now my interest is ahead.

I wonder what kind of tales are told by the village storytellers.
I thought of that while riding a small airship with Sala-sama.

The thing about me getting upset and shamefully crying and shouting when the small airship levitated is a secret.

※ Sala is one of the earliest Echigoya's executives like the Manager. This should be the first time she's mentioned in name.

TLN: Chapter 14 is still on-going

14-12. Territory of Duke Oyugock (1)

*

Satou's here. There are many things with [Eternal] word added aren't there. [Eternal Love] is fine, but I sure don't want to get close to the [Eternal Separation] words.

◇

"--The winner is Lulu Watari! The pupil of the miracle chef, Lulu Watari has won the overall victory!"

Called by the host, Lulu who looks nervous gets up on the stage.

I, who was sitting on the special judge seat, also got called by the official to go up the stage.
I'm in charge of giving the trophy to the champion.

Since one of my companion is participating in the contest, I only had to give brief comments on the grading.

"You've done well Lulu. Congratulations for the victory."
"Yes, thank you very much!"

The venue is filled with applauses when Lulu receives the trophy.
This place is a big theater prepared by Echigoya Firm, so the guests should be able to see this scene from their seats.
There are a lot of people buying and consuming food, maybe because they saw some appetizing dishes during the contest.

"Next, the runner up, the chef of Echigoya Firm, Mr. X!"

On top of wearing a black mantle, his body is covered in bandages and he's even wearing sunglasses.
The only people who know the real identity of Mr. X in this place are Arisa and me.

"During the final, he was defeated with a very narrow margin by Lulu Watari, his cooking ability which he displayed up until that time had won him complete victories, it was truly miraculous! Together with Chevalier Lulu Watari, hone your skills and broaden the road of culinary in Shiga Kingdom!"

The host praises Mr. X with an awfully passionate speech.

When I gave him a trophy that's smaller than the one before, the applause from the judge's seats were more passionate than the ones from the audience.
From their point of view, the flavor cooked by Mr. X which was more attuned to the judges is probably better liked than Lulu's flavor which was more attuned to me and my companions.
If Lulu didn't notice that during the final, she probably wouldn't have won.

"--U-um! Mr. X-san."
"What is it, Lulu-dono?"

Lulu called Mr. X who came down the stage after receiving the trophy.

"Thank you for teaching me the point I was lacking at!"
"Hmph, it was you who noticed it by yourself."
"No! If you didn't tell me, 『Whom do you intend to feed those cooking for』 I might have continued making my mistaken self-conceited dishes."
"If you understand that, make more delicious cooking from now on. I look forward to the day we meet again."
"Yes! I won't lose next time!"

Lulu who should be the winner declared like she was the challenger toward Mr. X who went away while raising his arm.

After seeing that off, I gave participating medals and some brief comments to the participants who didn't won the third place.
The other six chefs' cooking were delicious too, but Lulu was prominent even among them.
Looks like preparing a rival so that she won't become conceited is a good decision.

"Lulu! Congratulations for your victory!"
"Congrats~"
"Happy nodesu!"
"Nn, great."

Lulu who came back to the waiting room got congratulated by the other girls one by one.
Then, the sound of rumbling stomaches resound.

The sounds of Tama and Pochi who were being carried by Liza on her arms were the loudest, but my Attentive Ears skill picked up the sounds from Liza's and Lady Karina's stomaches.

"There's still a long time before the meal, should we borrow the cookwares from the contest management to make something and eat?"
"""Ye~s"""
"Yay! Nanodesu!"

Tama seems very happy, she makes five clone bodies and dances.
One of that body is still being carried by Liza.

Unlike the kagebunshin that appears in manga, this must be a type of magic.

I'll study under Tama-sensei and try to become a genuine ninja.

And then, even though I only intended to make some light lunches for my companion, somehow or another it became a barbecue feast with the venue.
Since I had taken some [Digestive Medicine] and eaten a lot of cooking during the contest, I got to only work as a skewer turner, but since everyone was happy, I deem it good.

In addition, since remote controlling Satou's doll AKA Mr.X while doing another thing was quite difficult, I ought to think of another way before the next match with Lulu.

◇

"We bestow Lulu Watari with『Oyugock Dukedom's Special Grade Kitchen Master』Noren and supplementary prizes."
<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/noren >

During the ceremony in the duke castle, Lulu was given a congratulatory address and Noren from the duke.
I've never seen any shop that hangs Noren on its entrance, it's probably some kind of good luck charm like when you give surume and kombu during an engagement gifts exchange.

The female executive branch manager of Echigoya Firm in Oyugock Dukedom, who came in place of Mr. X-sensei as he was "sick", received the [Oyugock Dukedom's First-class Grade Kitchen Master] Noren and the supplementary prizes with a stiff face.
I'll present her with some liquor for this hardship later.

After completing the ceremony without accident, we left the castle and went to one part of the noble district.

"Hee, so this is the mansion that Lulu got?"
"Y-Yes... That seems to be the case."

Viewing from the carriage that had stopped in front of the mansion, we saw a big mansion that Lulu received as the supplementary prize.
It's small compared to an upper class noble's mansion, but it's on the upper side of a lower class noble, a splendid mansion that look like it's for a baron.
It's located in the lower class noble district, but since it's facing toward the main street that connects the noble-use harbor and the duke castle, its location is quite good.

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting, Viscount Pendragon-sama. The gate will open shortly, please wait a little."

A butler who ran from the mansion told me so and opened the gate.

I thought he looked familiar, turned out he was the butler who was managing the detached building of Earl Wolguck's mansion when we stayed there.
It was probably arranged by the previous Earl Wolguck who are in the duchy capital.

Around 30 maids are standing in line in the rotary before the mansion's entrance.

Everyone is wonderfully wearing a maid uniform.
Looks like it's finally begun to spread in Shiga Kingdom.

"""Welcome back Master."""

When I got off the carriage, the maids bowed their heads all at once.
According to the AR readings, it seems they're employees dispatched by

Marquis Lloyd and Earl Houen.

"The master of this mansion is not me, but Chevalier Watari over here you know?"
"P-please excuse us."

The butler apologized while bowing his head.
It seems there's a discrepancy in the communication.

Not only the mansion has been cleaned, fine furnitures that are usually found in the mansion of an upper class noble have also been prepared inside.

Moreover--.

"It's amazing! It's completely equipped with magic tools for cooking."
"They are items from Earl Houen's magic tool workshop which are coveted among the merchants. My master would be pleased if Chevalier-sama would use them habitually."

A veteran maid dispatched from Earl Houen house answered Lulu who was gleefully looking at the brand new magic tools.
We're not going to permanently stay here, so I tell her not to bring things like microwave oven, steam cooking and IH cooking heater.

Lulu wanted to cook with the mithril kitchen knife set she got along with the Noren, but since we're invited to a banquet in the evening, there's no time for it.
Lulu was longingly watching at the kitchen, but when Arisa called her, she went to the closet room to dress up while looking like her back hair stood up.

◇

"Now my lady, allow me to take your hand."
"Eh, um? Is it alright for me to be escorted?"

Lulu happily takes my hand even while looking hesitant.
Lulu is the lead role today, so there's no need to hesitate.

"Sir Pendragon has come!"
"Viscount-sama! Do you remember me?"
"Satou-sama! Please dance with me."

When we entered the assembly hall, some familiar loli noble daughters and unfamiliar young ladies met me.
I don't know the reason why I'm this popular, but thanks to Sera and the princess's guards, I escorted Lulu without any interruption.

"C-can I really dance in such a prominent dance party?"
"Please don't worry. Zena-sama looks beautiful even compared to the other ladies."

Liza backed up Zena-san who was getting anxious.
I think the parties in the royal castle were more flashy, but it's probably just a rounding error of the refined Zena-san.
In order to make her get accustomed to this early on, I'll let her participate in this kind of events more.

"Meat tasty~"
"This meat here is delicious too nodesu."
"Cut fruit."
"Mia! This fruit is a rose, so I report."
"Nn, pretty."

Tama, Pochi, Mia and Nana are engrossed with the dishes together with

Lady Karina.

"It seems you add this sauce to the meat."
"The sauce is spilling~?"
"If you put another meat above the meat, it won't spill nodesu."
"As expected of Pochi desuwa."
"Nice~"

Glad that they're enjoying it.

"Did you not know? Sir Orion has gone back to visit his hometown."

When I asked a familiar-looking young noble about Lady Karina's little brother, Orion-kun, I was told that he's currently visiting Muno Earldom.
I haven't got any mail from Muno Earldom since I've been traveling with an airship recently.

"Satou-dono, I've collected the pedigree of the eastern small country group."
"Thank you."

Toruma gave me a booklet that contains the condensed information of the eastern small country group.
I only skimmed at it, but I saw that it had information about the tastes and the ways to negotiate with important figures, even better than the tourist book.

He'd have been successful if he used this talent in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs....

"Satou-dono! Why didn't you invite me to the barbecue meeting!"
"Truly truly! It was already over when I rushed there after my retainer informed me about it!"

Marquis Lloyd and Earl Houen who were usually always smiling pressed me with menacing looks.
These two should have eaten a lot as the judges, I never thought that they had enough willpower to eat more.

"I'm very sorry. I was worried about your stomaches so I kept it a secret while intending to invite you two for another day."
"I-is that so! As expected of Satou-dono."
"U-umu! I'm looking forward to the next barbecue meeting!"

The barbecue meeting is already decided huh.... These two's stomaches sure are youthful.

Afterwards, Viscount Shimen, Viscount Emlin, and even the previous Earl Wolguck couple wanted to participate too, the scope of the barbecue meeting was getting bigger.
I intended it to be a small meeting, but since the invitee had increased too much, we will open the meeting in two days, borrowing the duke's castle open space.
The retainers of Marquis Lloyd will handle everything besides the cooking, so I only need to tell the required ingredients and tools to him.

"Head Miko-sama is?!"

Sera who was talking with a priest of Parion Temple leaked out a voice of surprise.
I had a bad feeling when I saw Sera running toward me with a pale face.

◇

"Head Miko-sama!"

Together with Sera, I visited TenionTemple, and the two of us were led to the sanctuary where the Head Miko was.
They might misunderstood that I was Sera's fiance since everyone including the princess had stayed in the parlor.

"....Sera, I'm happy to see you in the end...."
"Don't say the end! Please don't say the end...."

When we met the Head Miko in the sanctuary she feebly lied sideway.
She has [Infirmity] condition.

"....You've brought Nanashi-san along too."
"No, this person is Satou-san."
"The child back then....Come...."

Beckoned by the Head Miko, I sit down beside Sera.

"....Please take care of Sera."

The Head Miko's shaking hand puts my hand on top of Sera's and then she puts her own hand above them.
Thin, light hand....

"....Sera you've overcome your fate."

Light is lost in the Head Miko's eyes.

"That's why....Find your happiness...."
"Head Miko-sama!"

Sera clings to the Head Miko who has lost her consciousness.

"""Head Miko-sama!"""

The priests make Sera fall back, and then they begin to heal the Head Miko with holy magic.
Sera wanted to participate too, but since the boost effect from the sanctuary would decrease if people without priesthood participated, she was rejected.

Before long, her condition stabilized with the effort of the high ranking priests, priests and miko, we left the sanctuary.
Sera wanted to stay, but since she looked like she would be a hindrance, I took her back.
In addition, I gave a lot of recovery magic potion to the temple.

◇

....Life span huh.

I think about the Head Miko's condition while patting Sera's head.
Sera who was crying while clinging to me until just a while ago had cried herself to sleep.

I lightly put her under mind magic [Quiet Sleep]. She should be able to rest until tomorrow now.

I change into Nanashi and then head to Tenion Temple's sanctuary.
Head Miko's [Coma] condition had gone away, so I visited her as Nanashi.

The inside of the temple was not under my dominion, so I didn't use Unit Arrangement, I intruded using Sky Drive after getting near.
There was a miko on guard duty inside the room but since she looked like she was sleeping due to tiredness, I let her sleep under [Quiet Sleep] magic like Sera.

"....Nanashi-san?"

Head Miko's transparent voice reverberate in the moonlit room.

"I'm sorry for the late visit."
"It's okay....You came after all...."

I catch the hand which has extended to me.

"....The heaven has called for me."

The Head Miko calmly shook her head before I could deny it.

"It's alright....I know my own condition well...."

It's exasperating that my experience is lacking.
Unable to say even a word to soothe her at a time like this--.

"Hey, I have one last wish....Take off your mask and please show me your face...."

Since the Head Miko requested for it, I took off my white mask.

"So you really are Nanashi-san...."

Head Miko let out a smile that looks like it'll disappear.

"Please take care of Sera...."

The light on Head Miko's eyes decrease like during the daytime.
I use the same [Awaking] magic that the miko on duty uses.

"Head Miko!"
"Please call me by my name....I'm Lily...."
<TLN: Was translated as Riri before, either way's valid.>

I hold her in my arms and call her name, but Head Miko closes her eyes after fleetingly smiled.
Her life wavelength is disappearing in my arms.

The miko on duty went to call the priests in panic, but they had also fallen from the overworked condition.
I have to do something until they come.

"Lily!"

I use the forbidden magic [Life Force Transfer] while calling the Head Miko's name.
Her stamina stopped decreasing for only a moment, but it quickly began to decrease again.

I took out a holy sword from the Storage and repeated [Life Force Transfer] for as long as the magic power continued.
Aside from magic power, I don't have enough Blood Beads needed for the [Life Force Transfer].

It seems the priests seem to be in a hurry too, but their conditions are worse than during the day.
Even if they could make it, I don't think they can do anything about it.

I've used up all the Blood Beads.
There's no time to get more from the True Ancestor Ban.

100...90...80, Miko Head's life is running out while I'm thinking.

--Not yet!

I open the [Life Force Transfer] code and modify it so that it uses higher grade item than the Blood Bead, Blood Sphere.

...70...80....

My over-abused brain complained about the burn-like pain, but I don't want to hear it.

...50...40....

I did it!
However, there's no time to chant the [Life Force Transfer Rev] spell.
I decided to use a trick. I overwrite the registered [Life Force Magic] in the magic column with the revised version.

...30...20....

I feel twice the pain from earlier and has almost fainted from it, but I get ahold of myself somehow.

--Invoke [Life Force Tranfer Rev]

Alright! Head Miko's stamina has stopped decreasing.
It went back to a fixed value no matter how many times I repeated it. If this keeps up, it'll be just like earlier.

Compared to the Blood Beads, I have a lot more Blood Spheres, but it's not unlimited.

Is there anything I can do....

I recall my memory.
Anything, if I just have some kind of hint....

I felt a weak touch on my face.
The Head Miko has extended her slender hand, wiping down the tears

streaming down my cheeks.

"Nanashi-san, thank you.... It's fine already."

The Head Miko who has regained her consciousness string soundless words.
Light does not return in her eyes.

"This...Aged body...Let it rest...."

Is there nothing I can do against aging....
Even though I have the power to overwhelm demon lords, am I powerless against providence of nature....

Can't I do anything but crying, praying for a miracle....

--Is that really true?

『You can't wait for a miracle. You have to make it yourself!』

Arisa's laughing face that was like the sun floated in my mind.

You're right, Arisa.

--I'll create a miracle.

Remember Satou.

I should have a way remaining.

If it's possible to create trees and fish, people should not be an exception.
Like I care about taboo.

--I open the source code of [Another World]. I look for the code I need.

I keep using the [Life Force Transfer Revised] in order to keep Head Miko's life, so the parsing goes too slow to advance.
Don't complain, Satou.

If a cheap CPU can do concurrent processing, there's no way that I can't do it.
If Multi-Core is not possible, then I'll do at least Multi-Threading.

With a reckless thought that's unbelievable for the usual me, I split the processing time.

>[Parallel Thought (Thread Think)] Skill Acquired.
>[Parallel Magic Usage (Background Cast)] Skill Acquired.

Cheers for Easy Mode.
When I activated the skills, the processing became remarkably easier.

--I can make it!

I've ran out of magic power from the holy sword, and the Blood Sphere that has lost its power turned into dust on my hand.

--So what.

I take out a spare from the Storage and continue the healing and the remodeling.

Well prepared means no worries.
I smash the malicious flag and I finally complete the new magic.

"■■■■■ ■ ..... ■ 『Generate Life』"

The Head Miko's body is wrapped in rainbow colored light.

I couldn't see her from the light, but the AR reading showed that her condition changed from [Infirmity, Verge of Death] to [None].

"Are you crying Nanashi-san?"

I can hear a clear voice from inside the light.
Hands wrapped in light wipe my tears.

"Head Miko-sama!"

The fastest priest finally jumped into the room.
Slightly later after him, priests and miko rush one after another.

Everyone has uniformly stopped at the room entrance, it seems they're surprised at the rainbow light that's wrapping the Head Miko.
I put on the white mask and turn around toward them.

The rainbow colored light disappears behind me.

"....Head Miko, sama?"

The Temple Head who looked dumbfounded asked like he was bewildered.

When I turn back toward the Head Miko, I see a six year old little girl who's wearing oversized bedclothing putting her hands on her cheek while looking perplexed.

>Title [One who Creates Miracles] Acquired.

◇

"Are you really Head Miko-sama?"

"Sera, this is the third time you know."

Loli Head Miko looks at the surprised Sera gleefully.
She's slightly fatigued similar to Sera when she was revived with the [Revival Artifact] back then, but besides that she's exceedingly healthy.

"But, how?"
"I was bestowed with a miracle."

Loli Head Miko looks at me and smiles profoundly.

We have decided that her rejuvenation is to be a [Miracle of God].
God Tenion will likely not complain since it means that there will be many more people who will pray to God Tenion from now on. Probably.

I didn't intend for her to become this young, but let's consider it a good thing since her life is not in danger anymore.
Even Loli Head Miko herself is delighted, saying, "I can pass as Sera's little sister now."

Outwardly, she's going to be introduced to the public as an apprentice miko.
As the postscript, Loli Head Miko is also participating the barbecue meeting happily.

14-13. Territory of Duke Oyugock (2)

*

Satou's here. I like my barbecue medium rather than rare. I thought anything but well-done was impossible when I was small, but it seems my way of thinking changed with my age.

◇

"Here's the barbecue."
"We've put some vegetables too."

Arisa and Hikaru presented me a plate with some food.
Before my eyes, Lulu and the participants of the cooking contest are currently grilling the barbecue like they're competing while treating the meeting participants in this barbecue meeting.

"Are you still worried about it?"
"What is it about?"

Arisa and Hikaru exchanged words while taking seats besides me.

"There's a loli girl eating meat between Pochi and Tama right?"
"The girl in high spirit who's really enjoying herself is it."
"Right that's her, that girl is 80 year old you see."
"Hmm, and?"

Is there any problem, Hikaru said while looking puzzled.

"'And', aren't your reaction too light to see someone who looks 70 younger than she is?"
"I mean, since she's a level 50 saintess, it's not strange for the country to

assist her in prolonging her life isn't it. Looking at her skill composition, she probably can use Prayer magic too."

Prayer magic is a magic that can grant every kind of wish, its user is extremely rare.

According to Hikaru, there was a time where the user even successfully revived someone.
However, the criteria for the prayer magic to be granted by the god is unsettled, the combination of the praying clergyman and the granting god and the situation seem to be changing.
It'll be hard for the wish to be granted if you keep asking for the same thing or something selfish.

"By assist-- you mean something like the『Rejuvenation Medicine』?"
"Un, that's right. Most Selbira explorers don't do it, but explorers in Saga Empire regularly get ahold of several pieces of Blood Beads every month from the [Bloodsucking Labyrinth], so it's not something that rare."

Yet I think they're not circulating in the market.

When I asked about it to Hikaru, she said, "One of the beads only rejuvenates several years of your life. Maybe the nobles of Saga Empire bought them all up?"
During the time when Hikaru was excessively hunting the [Rejuvenation Medicine], she often disputed with the retainers of the lineage nobles too it seems.

Come to think of it, the pope of Holy State Parion was youthful even though he was 150 year old.
I wonder if he's keeping his youth using [Rejuvenation Medicine] and [Prayer Magic]?

"So, what's the relationship between that loli girl's rejuvenation and

Satou's listlessness?"
"That's--"

I stop Arisa who was going to answer Hikaru and talk about it myself.

"I've ended up reviving someone who should have died a natural death."
"Hmm? It was before she died right? Prolonging your life with [Rejuvenation Medicine] was normal during my nation founding time you know?"

From Hikaru's perspective, it doesn't seem to be different than healing a sick person with magic potion.
However, that's not the problem here.

"Even though the person herself had accepted her death, I acted contrary to that and kept her alive out of my selfishness."

It was before her death to be exact, but there's no mistake that I had twisted the Head Miko's will.

"But, you know."

Hikaru pats my head.
It seems I've lowered my head due to the remorse before I realized it.

"The person herself looks really happy you see?"

Arisa pushed her flat chest to my head, and turned my head toward the venue.
There's the figure of loli Head Miko happily racing toward a whole roasted haired cow together with Pochi and Tama at the place where Arisa is pointing at.

"Wait, Arisa. I was about raise my affection level, don't steal the march."

"Fuffuun, first come first served!"

Affection....

"Moreover, it seems Satou regards life span as a sacred thing, but isn't that the sense of value from earth?"
"--What do you mean?"

I don't think that I regard it as sacred though....

"Life is absolute on earth. There's no human who doesn't die after all, things like human clone and copying consciousness to a computer to prolong life only exist in SF type literary works right."

I agree with Hikaru.
It's natural for living creatures to die a natural death.

"However, it's different in another world (here). Even if we regard the eternally living immortals, or elves who live a long seemingly-eternal live as special cases, there are many fairykins who live for thousands of years, and there are even normal humans who live for hundreds of years by continuing consuming Rejuvenation Medicine."

--The sense of value is different from the earth's because the premise is different.

It seems that's what Hikaru wanted to say.

"Besides, I know that there's an preconception of someone forcing someone else to keep living against their will on earth, but isn't it different in this case."
"That's right. There are probably not a lot of people who would refuse getting rejuvenated to their young body, though there are probably going to be a lot who would if they have to keep living in their aged body."

"Even if there's some, it's probably due to religious reason right?"
"Yeah, like refusal of blood donation or something."

I wonder how is the doctrine of Tenion Temple?

"Master~?"
"We've brought the most delicious meat nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi brought a bulging steak on a large plate.
Together with loli Head Miko.

"Satou-san, are you not feeling well?"

The Head Miko who totteringly walked to me, climbed on my lap and peeked at my face.

"He's worried as to whether he has obstructed Lily's natural death."
"--Obstructed?"

Hearing Arisa, loli Head Miko looked puzzled.

"Ah.... The words from that time is it? You're cruel--"

Loli Head Miko swelled her cheeks and glared at me.
As I thought, what I did was just imposing my hypocrisy....

"Telling everyone about my embarrassing words like this!"
"--Eh?"

What does she mean?

"I was just slightly enraptured by the situation. Being embraced by a gentleman who had good will during your death's bed, wouldn't that tickle your maiden's heart?"

--Head Miko-san?

"I understand!"
"Ah, nothing you can do about that."

Arisa and Hikaru also agreed.

"...Do you not hold a grudge?"
"Ara? I had conveyed my gratitude that day though?"

It did feel like she said, "Thank you, Nanashi-san."

"There is no falsehood in my words that day. Furthermore, I'm even more thankful now."

Loli Head Miko sits on my lap and stretches her hands toward the sun.

"Being young is wonderful. I can freely move my arms and legs, my joints aren't aching too. I can run without running out of breath, I can immediately stand up when I sit. I can even eat again the meat dish that I liked. Moreover! I had completely forgotten that food have such rich flavors."

The Head Miko's smile that won't lose to the sun is dazzling.
Although there's a feeling like she's trying to cheer me up, there is no fabrication in that smile.

"Right now, I'm really happy you know? That's why please don't look so gloomy okay?"

I was feeling gloomy until just a while ago, but I felt as if her smile washed that away.
As expected of Saintess-sama.

"But, where did Master and Lily get acquainted?"

Arisa talked like she was a wife probing her husband's affair.

"I think it was in Tenion Temple's sanctuary?"

Since loli Head Miko looked troubled, I told them that we met for the first time during Sera's revival through the [Revival Artifact].
I've talked about it with Arisa before, and Hikaru seems to know the existence of the [Revival Artifact], there should be no problem.
In addition, Tama and Pochi have gone to refill the emptied platter, so they're not here right now.

"Even though we talked a lot, we had only met three times huh."

My interaction with Head Miko-san can be counted with one hand, but the times I had with her were comfortable.
As for the reason why I was so upset when she was dying, I don't know whether it was because I didn't want to lose those comfortable times, or because I saw the death of my companion on her.

During that time, I felt a mysterious uneasiness in my mind, "I can't let this person to die here."
I don't have [Foresight] or [Prediction] skills, but when I think about it in hindsight, there's no doubt that my uneasiness was the reason why I denied her death.

"Now now, let's end the difficult talk. Satou-san, let's enjoy the barbecue meeting with everyone!"
"Yes, let's go."

While holding Loli Head Miko, I go to the venue together with Arisa and Hikaru.

Let's enjoy today too.

◇

"--To everyone who's gathered here. Yuu Tenion Head Miko has gone to God Tenion's side."

Several days after the barbecue meeting, we went to the funeral service of Head Miko at the Tenion Temple's cathedral in the noble district.

"It sure feels strange to go to your own funeral."
"Head--Lily-sama, I don't care if anyone heard it okay."

Interposing between Sera and me, loli Head Miko--Lily dangles her legs while looking at the funeral.

"From now on, the title of Yuu Tenion will be succeeded by assistant head miko Neyuna to assume as the new Head Miko."

Looking at Lily who's clapping her hands the foremost, Ms. Neyuna smiles bashfully.

The day Lily was rejuvenated--.
At first they were going to announce that Lily was rejuvenated by god's miracle, but in the end, it was decided to announce that the Head Miko had passed away and passed the baton to the assistant head miko, Ms. Neyuna.
The reason was because there was a high possibility that old people in the continents would flock here to seek for the rejuvenation miracle.

It seems that loli Head Miko is going to support Tenion Temple as an

apprentice miko Lily.

Further, the duke, the king, the king's body double who are all Lily's old friends have been informed about the rejuvenation via Hero Nanashi. Lily's acquaintance during her time as a hero's attendant--the warrior, Mrs. Blum Julberg and Ms. Sebelkea in the labyrinth city--are going to be informed gradually, so I didn't help contacting them.

◇

"Nana and Nana's masita!"
"Nana, play!"

Nana and the sealionkin's children who are playing with her wave their hands toward me.
The girls are wearing uniforms of Echigoya Firm's spinning mill.
Of course they're not formal staff members, but they're hired to work on odd jobs.

"My, how cute."
"Cute? Miko is cute too."

A sealionkin child who's being held by Nana is looking at Lily adorably.
They look of the same age outwardly, so it's somehow heartwarming.

"Master, requesting the ultimate colored lunch box for the lunch."
"Since I didn't prepare any lunch box, should we buy from the stalls?"
"Masita, sardines tasty."
"Masita, octopus skewers tasty."

As requested by the sealionkin children, we head toward the shop which sells octopus and dried sardines skewers.

"Do they suit your palate?"
"Yes, I often ate them ever since I was small."

Lily who's holding a sardine skewer and an octopus skewer on both hands bragged a little.
She's probably enjoying her return to child's mind.

"Oba-chan, buy me some food."
"You, are you out of job again? Eat these pickles if ya like."
"Waa, thank you. Oba-chan I love you!"

I heard a deja vu conversation from the crowd.

"You seem busy nowadays."
"Un, the girls who couldn't stand working as prostitutes have all gone to work on the spinning mill, so I got a lot of customers, my waist hurts."
"To hire people without letters of recommendation, Echigoya Firm sure is generous."
"Ahaha, at first everyone gossiped that they were a new fraud."
"You don't want to go there?"
"I can only work as a prostitute, I won't go there. I have some regular customers too."
"I see, then do your best kay."
"Un, that's why please give me a bit more pickles!"

It's the combination of the oba-chan and the prostitute onee-san who taught me about Kuhanou Pickles before.
It seems they're as energetic as ever.

I was thinking of calling them, but stopped since I was with children.

After sending the sealionkin children to the spinning mill, I joined everyone, and enjoyed the singing of Cyriltoa the diva.

We stayed longer than planned, but since we're not in a hurry in this trip, it should be fine.
Our airship flies away while being seen off by the people of the Duchy Capital.

Next, we'll be going to the self-governing dominion of the dwarves.
Let's go meet Elder Dohar in Bolhart city!

14-14. Bolhart (1)

*

Satou's here. Meeting a friend in an unexpected place makes for a lively conversation. There were even times when the day ended before you realized it even though you met at noon.

◇

"What a wonderful scenery."
"Yes, this must be the famous great river of Oyugock Dukedom."

Princess Shistina replied to Zena.
Our small airship is currently going upstream in the sky above the great river.

The other girls are also enjoying the scenery from the viewing deck.
This place is protected with [Canopy] magic, it's a safe design that won't even let their skirts flipped by the wind.

"Nice view~?"
"Tama, that place is dangerous nodesu!"
"It's awright~"

While that may be so, Tama, doing a daunting pose on top of the thin railing is a bit.

"Master, it's a flock of migratory birds so I report."
"Nn, flamingos."

Nana and Mia are pointing to a flock of fatty pink colored birds that are crossing the large river.

They're a bit different than the flamingos I know, but they're probably the flamingos here.

Arisa who was looking at the spectacle listlessly suddenly looks taken aback and then she swings her arms.

"Those who are free, look to the port side!"
"Arisa? That's the starboard you know?"

Lulu corrected Arisa's mistake.
Looking at Arisa's awkward expression and her theatrical tone, it must have been some kind of parody.
<TLN: Apparently, a gundam's reference. Episode 31 of the original anime.>

"Master, I caught two birds for now, I wonder if they're delicious roasted whole?"

There are two flamingos with wired harpoons on Liza's arms.

--Liza, too quick.

"If I'm not mistaken, it tastes like chicken, should we barbecue it?"
"Yes! Once I've drained the blood, I'll strip off the beautiful feathers."
"Yeah, I'm counting on you."

I've eaten some flamingo in a trip abroad back then, but I never thought that I would get to eat it in another world too.

We arrived at the grapevine mountains in the evening of the day.

There was still some time until the ships cruising the large river stopped coming, so we went to the herd of Sky Deers in the neighboring summit to kill time.

"Prey~?"

"Pochi will catch them this time nodesu!"
"You can't."
"Pochi can't nanodesu?"
"Yup, you can't."

The beastkin girls wanted to hunt the sky deers, but since I had a little debt with the Sky Deers, I told them not to.
The slightly downhearted Pochi looked cute, but I can't yield here.

Afterward I negotiated with the management of the Phantom Firefly Cavern's service and got the permission to directly cruise in the cavern by half-submerging the airship in the water.

"Oh my! This place is the famous Phantom Firefly Cavern isn't it! Mrs. Litmaiya boasted about it when she got married."
"Hee, that stiff principal did huh~"

While the princess who came here for the first time and Arisa were conversing about a common acquaintance, they look around the Phantom Firefly Cavern.

Zena-san who also saw the cavern for the first time looked at the ceiling too much, she lost her balance and fell back.

"Kya"
"Are you alright?"
"Y-yes! Thank you Satou-san."

Supported by me, Zena-san seems to be embarrassed with her blunder, she looks really bashful.

"Kuh, he naturally raised a flag!"
"Mwu, guilty."

Arisa and Mia muttered something, but everyone was able to thoroughly enjoy the Phantom Firefly Cavern without any trouble.
It's possible to enjoy the time here no matter how many times you come here huh.

◇

After we had done greeting the viceroy of Gururian city, we changed our clothings to commoner clothes and took a walk around the city.
We're split into several groups since it'd be too conspicuous if we were in one large group.

The ones who are with me are Arisa, Lady Karina and Sera.

"Is this gururian? I like ankoromochi more desuwa."

We got some huge adzuki beans after defeating plant-type monsters [Adzuki Shooters] during our leveling in the labyrinth, so there was a time when I made some koshian and ankoromochi.
That reminds me, her face was full of bean jam along with Pochi and Tama wasn't it.

"Y-you're eating it with bare hands?"
"That's right! You don't split them with chopsticks, the right manners to do it is by heartily biting them whole!"

Arisa instills some manners to the bewildered upper-class Sera.

She pushes her face asking for me to wipe the bean jam around her mouth.
Geez, what a hopeless girl.

"I did this to service Master."

....Don't lie.

I stopped Sera who looked like she was going to follow Arisa's nonsense, and wiped Lady Karina who was too late to be stopped.
For some reason, Sera who should be spotless looked vexed. It's a mystery.

"Ah! Noble onii-chan!"

A little girl who was cleaning a hardware store found me and then happily ran to me.

....Who is she again?

"Look, she was one of the girls who rode in our carriage when we came to the city back then."

I recalled her with Arisa's help.
Ah, come to think of it, we did let a pair of villager sisters who were looking for employment to ride in our carriage.

"Is your big sister healthy?"
"Un, she is!"

The little girl's line of sight was locked on to the gururian that I was eating, so I let her eat it.
She's in the middle of her work, but a mouthful should be fine.

"Yummyy!"

I intended to only give her a mouthful, but since it looked like she was even going to eat my hand, I gave her the whole gururian.

"Now then, Master, your hand please."

I pinned and stopped Arisa who was going to lick the remaining red bean paste on my hand.
Sera presented a handkerchief, but I used life magic [Soft Wash] to clean the paste instead of dirtying the handkerchief.

The little girl and Arisa said, "What a waste!"
The two must have different meanings of that.

An acquaintance showed up from the hardware shop that the girl was working at.
It's Galhar-shi, the dwarf magic shop manager who helped me in defeating the [Golden Wild Boar King], I'm greatly indebted to him.
The big sister villager girl came out from behind him, but I'll leave it Arisa to talk with her.
I lightly put up my hand to respond the villager girl big sister who bowed her head.

"It's been awhile Galhar-san."
"If it isn't Satou-dono!"

Galhar-shi firmly shakes my hand for the reunion.
Thinking it was strange that he came out of a hardware store instead of a magic shop, I asked him about it.

"The shopkeeper here has a hobby y'see. I came here to challenge him in an『Arithmetic Game』. I couldn't do it at all when Driar-shi became a mayor, but he, Jojori and I learned『Advanced Arithmetic』under Driar-shi you see."

Galhar-shi had a faraway look toward the sky while saying, "It was fun."
I asked him about his plan after this, it seemed that he's going to take a carriage to Bolhart city by the request of a merchant friend.

"I plan to go to Bolhart city too, would you like to go together?"
"Is it alright? Then maybe I should take the ride."

Since he readily consented like that, it was decided that we were to go together but--.

"Eh? Airship? Personal airships, aren't those only the Boruenan Light Ships? Eh? Is it because of Misanalia-sama?"

--And so he was panicking for the first half of the trip.
I feel like I somehow did a bad thing.

"Are you alright?"
"Yeah sorry for troubling you...."

After drinking a jug of ale, he changed back to his dandy calm state.

"S-so, are you going to Teacher's forge in Bolhart city?"
"Yes, there's that too.... I've got my hands on some God Metal (Orichalcon), so I plan to present them to Dohar-shi."
"God Metal (Orichalcon)? The one manufactured by High Elves-sama?"

I wonder if it's known as something High Elves created?
Even without High Elves, you can manufacture them as long as you have some philosopher's stone and high level skills.
In fact, I can manufacture them just fine.

"No, I got it from a little connection of mine."
"Beautiful.... So this is God Metal (Orichalcon). The ultimate metal used to create sacred treasures."

I showed him an Orichalcon Ingot while saying so, and then Galhar-shi muttered alone like he was thinking hard.

"If we have this, then teacher will surely....Jojori...."

14-15. Bolhart (2)

*

Satou's here. There was a time when the word Missing Link was popular. At that time I mistook the 'link' part with 'ring', once I lost my face when I talked about it with a friend.
It seems to point out the lack of continuity with the phenomenon, but I don't think I'll ever come across it as long as I live normally.

◇

"To the right~, a little bit to the right~?"

Tama is giving an instruction to us using flags in the open space near the city hall.
She was just here a while ago, fast little thing.

Following her instructions, the brownie in flight uniform landed the airship in the open space.

Dwarves in work clothes are peeking through the windows curiously from the city hall.
Since there were a lot of plump ones, it made me remember a flock of sparrows standing in row on a pole cable.

"It's been awhile, Sir Pendragon."
"Please excuse me for my long silence."

I exchanged handshakes with Driar-shi the mayor who came to greet us.
Driar-shi's secretary and daughter, Jojori-san, is also with him.

"Oh? Isn't it Galhar! Why are you here?"

"Hey Jojori, your surprised face is wonderful too. I'd like to have a date in the sky together with you."
"Mou, oh Galhar."

Jojori-san reacted while not wholly blushing to Galhar-shi who naturally said some playboy's line.

When they met in the magic shop back then, Jojori-san acted like an older sister to Galhar-shi, but it seems there was some kind of change during these half year.
According to Arisa, Jojori-san seems to be the type of "A firm career woman who's drawn to no-good men."

"Master, where should we carry the souvenirs to?"
"Master, requesting instructions."

Liza and Nana came with the carts where I put the wine barrels, so I confirm Driar-shi for the place to put them.
I held back my laughter when Arisa said, "Bar~rel", with an unusually cute voice in front of the wine barrel, it was strange but since it was just Arisa being eccentric like usual, I ignored it.
<TLN: Atelier series reference.>

"Ah Pochi! That box is different."
"Different nodesu?"

I stopped Pochi who was going to carry a wooden box with a set of sake cups inside.

"Galhar-san, this wooden box is a souvenir for Galhar-san, could I bring it to your shop?"
"Much appreciated! Even though I still have the liquor you gave me, thanks for that."
"Mou Galhar! You haven't said your thank about the scroll workshop right?"

Huh, what is it about?

"Right! I wanted to write a letter but then a day had passed. You spoke about me to Viscount Shimen right? Thanks to that, I was able to regularly stock the popular『Firework』scrolls. The deserted Galhar shop has now become a business big enough that I could hire a clerk."

I don't remember ever especially talked about him, but I feel that I've spoken the topic about Galhar in the duchy capital's scroll workshop. The workshop manager, Jung-shi probably worked about it.

"It's really thanks to Satou-san. Galhar's shop can now continue without worrying when it's going to bankrupt."
"That's awful Jojori. The goddess of fortune, that is you, is watching over my shop, so it won't go bankrupt you know."

When I was watching over the two's married couple-like conversation with warm eyes, Mayor Driar-shi came to call me.
Looks like my request to meet Elder Dohar has passed.

◇

"""God Metal (Orichalcon)!"""

The moment I took out the Orichalcon Ingot in Elder Dohar's room, the dwarven blacksmiths who were peeking on the entrance raised surprised voices at once.

"The heck you peeking at, you fools!"
"""We're sorry boss!"""

Elder Dohar drops his clenched fist to the dwarves who are doing seize in a line one by one.

"Sorry for the fuss."
"Please don't worry about it."

While the dwarves are still doing seiza, Elder Dohar went back to the table, and picked up the ingot.

"This is the God Metal (Orichalcon).... Furthermore, it's not a mere God Metal."

Elder Dohar looked at the ingot from various angles.
This is the first time I heard that, I wonder if it has some kind of classification?

"It must have been refined with the power of a quite high order Source. I can feel the blessing of the spirits just by touching it."

It's relatively easy to manufacture them as long as there are Crimson Treasures--Philosopher's Stone alchemy material, but there's no need to put a damper on Elder Dohar and the dwarves' passion, so I keep my silence.

"However, with this kind of God Metal, the usual facility used for mithril won't be enough."

Elder Dohar is looking at the ingot with a stern face.
Alright, this is the right [something like this might happen] timing to take out the Orichalcon hammer and anvil.

"Dohar-sama--"
"Alright Satou! Come with me!"

--Huh?

Elder Dohar stood up with whamp and then called to me.

Um, Orichalcon hammer and anvil....

"Jojori! Call Driar here! Tell him we're doing the Oblation Strike!"
"Yes!"

--Oblation Strike?

Some mysterious words appeared from Elder Dohar's mouth.

"Boss! O-Oblation Strike, that means--"
"That's right! I'm letting Driar to take over. We need to select Jojori's husband."

With Elder Dohar's words, the dwarven blacksmiths starting with Zajir begin to take strange poses to appeal with their muscles.
So Jojori-san really is popular among dwarven men.

"Satou, I said it before, don't you want to become Jojori's husband?"
"I am sorry, but our races are different."

I used the 'different races' excuse which was used by High Elf Aze-san to decline the marriage proposal.
It's a bit unfair, but there are times when it's necessary for an adult.

"--Oh right, yer' not a dwarf huh."

Elder Dohar murmured with a face like a dove that was shot by a peashooter.
Apparently, he completely forgot about my race.

"Can't be helped, I can't hand down my techniques if you can't deliver an heir."

Elder Dohar is thinking hard with his short arms folded
Then Driar-shi and Jojori-san rushed in.

"Driar! Who's going to be Jojori's husband? Decide it now!"
"H-husband is it, father?"
"G-grandfather!"

Driar-shi and Jojori-san were surprised to hear Elder Dohar.

Driar-shi who's composed himself from the shock first asks the perplexed Jojori-san with a soft voice.

"Jojori, whom do you want to be your husband."
"Ga--I..."

Jojori-san who was going to answer faltered.

I feel that she was going to utter Galhar-san's name.
Let's help her out a bit.

"Dohar-sama, do you want Jojori-san's husband for his blacksmithing talent? Or is it for his caliber as a mayor?"
"Neither. As long as he has the strength to take Jojori even after I knock him down, that's good enough."

Truly dwarf-like sense of value.

That kind of point does not suit the dandy Galhar-san.
If I had to say, the frank Zajir-shi suits that more.

For a while, silence rules this place.

"--I can't wait anymore. Let's get some suitable young lad to do a marriage interview for later."

Putting Jojori-san who couldn't answer onto the back burner, the impatient Elder Dohar continued the talk.

"The Oblation Strike is for me, Satou, Driar and Jojori to do--next we need a blacksmith and a magician. The blacksmith is, Zajir, you come."
"Yea! Boss!"

Zajir-shi whose name was called by Elder Dohar pushed his arm toward the sky and joyfully shouted.

The dwarves around him hit Zajir-shi with fists contained with blessings and envies.
Zajir-shi who smiles back to the strikes while covered in blood is scary.
Dwarf's blessing is quite violence.

"Next, we need a magician.... It's either of Don or Hahn brothers."
"Father, those two will sulk if you choose either of them."

Driar-shi stopped Elder Dohar's decision.

"We should choose another magician. For the magician assigned to do the Oblation Strike, he not only needs magic, but also arithmetic skill."
"T-then, let's ask Galhar-san. He had just come to the city hall."

Jojori-san pushed with Driar-shi's assist.

"Right. We'll go with that."

I don't know whether Elder Dohar noticed the unnaturalness of the two or not, but he easily accepted.

Zajir-shi grimaced with the reappearance of his rival, but he didn't make an objection to Elder Dohar's decision.

◇

"Awesome, the heat is getting higher."
"I-is this the road to the deepest part?"

While overlooking the red hot magma below from a suspension bridge, Zajir-shi and Galhar-shi muttered.
This place is the deep underground of Bolhart City, a different map area where the City Core is located.

After taking the cold water purification ceremony, everyone changed to white blacksmith clothing.

After crossing the suspension bridge and a long stone stairway, we advanced through a sandbar in the middle of a magma river.
There's a Japanese-style shrine, a barrier is set around the precincts.

『Land Lord Dohar, please give the permission for people besides Driar to enter.』
"Ou! Give the permission to Satou, Jojori, Zajir, and Galhar."
『Acknowledged.』

Elder Dohar replied to the voice of the City Core.
The barrier protecting the shrine is removed, and then we enter the inside with Elder Dohar leading.

I'm already used to seeing City Core area, but it's a bit different here.
There's a big window in the slightly Japanese-styled shrine, and bubbling magma can be seen from it.

"We've come for the Oblation Strike. Prepare for it!"
『Acknowledged. Please appoint the next Land Lord.』
"Driar."
『Completed the registration, please appoint the next proxy.』
"Oy, driar, do it."
"Y-Yes. I appoint Jojori as the proxy."
『Completed the registration, manifesting the Oblation Strike tools.』
]
In front of the City Core, an anvil made from blue crystal and several blue hammers and tongs appeared.
Apparently, they're made of magic power.

Next time I'll do various experiments in the city that I rule in Holy State Parion.

"Listen! Driar and Galhar take care of the operating board there. That operating board is going to be the deciding factor of the processing of God Metal that's harder than mithril. Driar, teach Galhar."
"Yes! Our responsibility is grave, but you should be able to do it. Show father that arithmetic is not unneeded!"
"Yes, teacher!"

Looks like Driar-shi gets along well with Galhar-shi.

"Satou, have you made another sword after the Fairy Sword?"
"Yes I have."
"Show me."

I can't take out a holy sword or a magic sword, so I take out a katana made of Damascus steel from the Storage bag.
I didn't reach the deepest secret of katanasmith taught by Ban in the labyrinth's lower layer, but I feel that it's quite a splendid work of mine.

"You've become quite good--"

After looking at it from various angles, Elder Dohar contemplated for a bit.

"Zajir, you take care of the Phase Hammer."
"Ey! Boss!"

Zajir stroke his own chest while having a smile on his whole face.

"Satou, read the scroll here. Can you read dwarf language?"

Skimming it, the dwarf language doesn't seem to be that different from elf language.
After secretly using force magic's [Translate], I was able to correct the difference in nuance.

"I can."
"Then I'll leave it to you."

Reading it more, I was shocked.

--Isn't this the dwarf's secret!

What are you doing showing this to an outsider.

"Dohar-sama, isn't this document something that shouldn't be shown to me?"
"I don't mind. It has to be with the greatest blacksmith--no, a blacksmith that can imagine the strongest. I and Zajir cannot imagine a sword that surpasses holy swords. I can feel that from the sword you made earlier."

I see, then I'm certainly fit for it.
After all, I do know a sword that surpasses holy swords--.

"Are you ready!"
"""OU!"""

Everyone answered Elder Dohar.

"Melting operation starts."
"Confirming the semi-fluid state, commencing the countdown, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1."

Driar-shi and Galhar-shi control the operating board.
The ingot on the anvil became red-hot and began to become soft.

"Oblation Strike, begin!"

With Jojori-san's signal, Elder Dohar and Zajir began to strike the ingot.
I put on the circlet-shaped tool, and imagine the strongest arm from the Shinza.

However, unlike in games and anime, it seems I can't simply just imagine it.

A magic sword's circuit was written in the book I read earlier to help me imagine it.
Judging from that, my position is to design all the magic circuit that will be granted to the sword.

And it seems the magicians, Driar-shi and the others are supporting it.

Now then, imagine it--.

The Divine Sword that can slay gods appear in my mind.

The blade of darkness.

"Hai!"
"Hou!"

The passionate yells of Elder Dohar and Zajir-shi striking the Orichalcon echoed.

I imagine the materialization of the magic circuit.
But the ideal is too high, it seems that it'll need an absurd capacity that won't fit the sword.

A question appears at the same time.
Did the dwarves continue to do such an absurd work from generation to generation?

--What?

A magic circuit that I'm not familiar with appears in my mind.
I wonder if it's from the City Core or perhaps the Accumulated Knowledge (Library) in the Dragon's Vein?

From the Accumulated Knowledge, I elect the circuit that complies with the image I have.

A precise circuit that seems impossible for people to get.
There is not even 1 bit of waste, it bears a vivid resemblance to the artistic programs from Z80 era.

"Amazing, it's amazing, Jojori."
"Yes, what a beautiful numerical formula."
"You two, concentrate on your work! The sword won't be perfected if there's even a slightest error!"
""Yes!""

I faintly heard the voices of the three people assisting with the calculation.
It's probably possible to create a sword equaling the Divine Sword if this keeps up.

--Wrong.

Denial appeared in my mind.
I wonder what's not right.

--Wrong.

The sword that's going to be completed now is the strongest sword.

--Wrong wrong wrong.

Alert-like voice echoes in my head.
Blue light shines before my eyes, the golden Orichalcon that's shaping up into a sword in Elder Dohar's hand, the red hot magma that surrounds the room....

--I see.

I realize the one answer that can't be expressed in words from the depth of my heart.

◇

『Finished the sequence of Oblation Strike. Please give it a name.』

The City Core's voice cuts the serene atmosphere.

"T-this is--"
"How beautiful."
"A-awesome. I can feel more power than the hero's holy sword I saw in the past."

Zajir-shi, Jojori-san, Galhar-shi were impressed with the completed sword.

"Father, congratulations."
"Yeah, it's thanks to you guys and Satou."

Driar-shi supports Elder Dohar who has exhausted his power.

"Satou, try putting magic power into that sword."
"Yes."

I receive the delicate slender sword.
It's a golden sword that looks exactly like the Divine Sword.

I slowly put magic power into it.

Light burst out.

"Blue light? Is it a holy sword?"
"It's not! There's red light too."
"Is it a magic sword? Or maybe a holy sword?"

The shocked voices from the surrounding didn't reach my ears.

I increase the quantity of magic power I put into it.
I've put a lot, but neither Holy Edge nor Magic Edge occurs.

The red and blue light become intertwined, spinning into one color.

"Violet light?!"
<TLN: See *TLN at the end of the chapter.>

Driar-shi's shout echoes.

At that time, what appeared in my mind were the odd sense of [Burning-like enthusiasm of the dwarves] and the [The imagined Divine Sword that brings freezing-like ruin and extinction].

That's why, I wasn't imagining the [Divine Sword] but a [Sword that can destroy the Divine Sword].
And then, this mysterious sword that emits violet light is the finished product.

"I name it. Holy Magic Sword--"
<TLN: the 魔 (ma) in the 'magic' part can also be translated as demonic/cursed.>

Holy Magic Sword huh, it's quite a fitting name.
Properly speaking, it's probably going to be named with the city's name or Elder Dohar's name.

"--Pendragon."

WHY?
How did that happen?

Elder Dohar who took the sword from my hand thrusts it into the City Core.
To be exact, to the hole opened in the City Core.

『Holy Magic Sword Pendragon, oblation complete.』

The City Core's voice reverberates.

Come to think of it, it was an [Oblation] Strike huh.

If the sword is not going to be present, I guess there's no problem even if it's named whatever.

Now that the ceremony is complete, everyone besides me is going to take a rest until they can walk back to the ground.
During that rest, I asked Elder Dohar about the reason for the name.

"Your house name is from the name of a hero who crushed a dragon right? Don't you think it's appropriate for that strongest sword?"

I see, come to think of it, I think I remember telling that story during our drinking chat.

◇

Afterwards, Driar-shi inauguration of the office of the land lord, Elder Dohar retirement, and the announcement of Jojori-san's engagement happened at the same time, the whole Bolhart City was wrapped in festival.

The candidates for Jojori-san's fiance are the two who participated in the Oblation Strike, Galhar-shi and Zajir-shi.

The viewing flight that was very popular in the labyrinth city was also terrificly popular here, one part of the people who lined up for their turn made a big uproar that almost ended into a fist fight.
I've closed the Gate inside the small airship so there's no problem.

During the seven day drinking bout, I participated in drinking bouts with various brands of liquor that the people brought together with Elder Dohar and the others.
There were a lot of strong liquor enough to numb my tongue, but since I

had a convenient body that could only get light drunkenness, I enjoyed the taste in full.
Among many of the smashed dwarves, the dwarves acknowledged my superiority in a strange meaning.

In addition, my companion were--.

The family-oriented members were taught blut and wurst-like sausages made from domestic animals that usually only appear during a festival and various sausage recipes from the female dwarves.
For some reason, the sausages that Arisa remodeled with magic were popular among the Bolhart's children.

The meat-eating members were vigorously hunting the monsters around Bolhart to supply the meat, they were revered like gods by the people who participated in the festival.
It seems the [Meat Song] which started with [Meat, meat, meat~] lyric composed by Pochi and Mia had become a boom by the time we were departing Bolhart.
In addition, the painting of [Hamburg Steak of Sunlight Filtering Through Trees] that master painter Tama made seems to be displayed in the Bolhart's art gallery.

◇

After the festival is over, the day when we were going to depart toward Muno Earldom, I asked a question to Elder Dohar after noticing a certain thing.

"Dohar-sama, where did the offered sword go to?"
"According to the legend, it's said that perhaps it's presented to heaven."

I see, looks like it's told that it's an offering to the god.
Judging from the way Elder Dohar spoke, it seems the City Core didn't have an answer to the question.

I look at the character string displayed on the Exchange Column's mailbox.
There--.

[Holy Magic Sword Pendragon] characters are displayed.

*TLN: Back then someone in the comment section suggested that I used violet as the word in Japanese could also mean that (EITHER CAN BE CORRECT depending on the context so please don't assume that this is an arbitrary decision from my side as a translator, it's still 100% true to the source). It had been established so much that I couldn't change it even after the raw of this chapter came out, but now that this chapter is translated, I think it's more appropriate to use 'purple' rather than 'violet' to refer to the color from now on. Readers, please take note.

Yes I know violet is a kind of purple.

14-16. Muno Earldom

*

Satou's here. There were times when work mails didn't reach me due to spam filter. For the mail to not be able to reach the mailbox unless it's been checked to be completely safe, if it's real, it's quite a dystopian world enough isn't it.

◇

When I select the mailbox in the Exchange Column on the menu, the sender's name is shown.
<TLN: Apparently the word ポスト (posuto) used in the raw means 'postbox' or 'mailbox' rather than just 'post' in this context. This applies to the previous chapter too.>

The sender's name is [UNKNOWN].

I don't think it refers to the mysterious little girl who appeared during my fight with the Dog-Head even though both their names are unknown.
In WW and FFW, you can't send and receive items from someone who isn't your friend, but even if that someone isn't in the name list, the sender will be shown as [UNKNOWN].

There's a [Reply] form in the mailbox, but it'd be problematic if I made the mysterious little girl an enemy had I carelessly sent it back.

--What should I do.

After hesitating for a bit, I choose to put a lid on this problem, postponing it.
Although I don't think it's one, it'll be scary if it's a trojan horse.

In addition, I couldn't send an item through the mailbox since I couldn't

write an address.
Nevertheless, I didn't know that such a function exist.

◇

"Oblation Strike? Ah, it's about the dwarves in Bolhart huh?"

Hikaru answered so when I asked her.

"I'm not really well-versed in it, but it's when they make a sword to offer to the God when the next Land Lord takes over right?"
"Can it be done in other City Cores?"
"I wonder? Probably not maybe?"

According to Hikaru, it seems making an offering during the change of Land Lord is an old custom that only the fairykin perform.

When I went further to Aze-san to ask about it, it seems during the era of founding kings, they offered items to the God as thanks for the help in every territory.

The receiver of the offering seemed to be the God who brought the City Cores to the founding kings, but Aze-san and the elves didn't know which God it was either.
There were eyewitness accounts saying that the offered items seemed to have been equipped by the elites of Dragon Valley, so perhaps it was the Dragon God.

However, even though I've killed the Dragon God, it seems that the others Gods are capable of interfering the Dragon's Vein, and it's possible for them to steal the offered items.

....Today I heard a lot of new things.

◇

"Would you help me? I'd like to try something."
"Of course I would."
"OK."

I brought Hikaru and Arisa along to the territory that I rule in the Holy State Parion.
It seems the City Core's barrier hasn't been broken yet even now.

"Ooh! So this is a City Core! This is the first time I see one, it's really pretty."

Arisa was astonished when she saw the City Core.

"And, what are we going to do here?"
"I'd like to check whether it's possible to do the Oblation Strike and making an offering during the changing of Land Lord."

I answer Hikaru while putting up the City Core's terminal.

"City Core, I'm changing the Land Lord. Is it possible to do the Oblation Strike?"
『It is not possible. The optional feature has not been installed.』

I-it's optional huh.
Then--.

"What should I do to install the optional feature?"
『Unknown.』

I asked just to test it, looks like it's impossible.

"Then can I make an offering?"
『It is possible.』

Looks like this one is possible.

"Can I specify the receiver of the offering? If it's not possible, who's the default receiver of the offering."
『It is not possible to specify. It is Master.』

....Fumu.

"Who is this 'Master'?"
『The meaning of the question is unknown. Master is Master.』

I wonder if this Master is not the God?
For now let's continue the experiment.

"Then please prepare the ceremony."
『Acknowledged. Please appoint the next Land Lord.』
"The Land Lord is Mito."
『Registration Complete, please appoint the next proxy.』

I asked Hikaru with eyes, and then she pointed at Arisa.

"It's Arisa-chan."
『Registration complete, please make an offering.』

I insert a diamond holy sword to the opening that appeared in front of the City Core.
It's something I've especially made for this experiment.

I've put a marker on this.

『Oblation complete. The ceremony is complete.』

I open the marker list on the menu, and check its current position.

....None huh.

If things went well I thought I'd know the receiver of the offering, but it seems the item itself has disappeared.

"How about it?"
"Not good. Looks like it disappeared."

It seems it won't go that well.

The diamond sword didn't reach the Exchange Column's mailbox.

◇

The airship which industriously advanced through the course entered Muno Earldom during my experiment.

The airship is landing in the open space of Muno castle.
It seems the people of Muno castle are receiving us below.

The loli maids are waving their hands energetically, welcoming us.

"""Chevalier-sama!"""
"Wa, idiots! It's not Chevalier-sama anymore."
"Ah, that's right. Which title was it again?"
"Viscount-sama."

"The same as Consul Nina-sama?"
"That's right! Great isn't it!"
"Uwah, that's amazing."
"....Marrying into the wealth."
"If things go well, his mistress."

Attentive Ears skill picked up the loli maids gossiping.

Please be at least more than 20 year old if you aim to be my mistress.
Not like I'd take them even after they were.

"""Satou-sama, welcome back!"""

The airship landed on the wide open space of Muno castle, when I showed my face from the ramp, the employees of Muno castle unloaded their voices together in good coordination.
I thought I wouldn't hear it due to the driving sound of the airship, but they all waved their hands saying, "Welcome back" in loud voices.

"I'm back~?"
"Pochi has come back nodesu."

Tama and Pochi take the shutan poses before the maids.

"Tama-chan, cute."
"Pochi-chan too!"
"Oy, you guys! Tama-san and Pochi-san are mithril explorers y'know?"
"Right right! They're now honorary nobles after meeting His Majesty, if yer' adding chan on their names, ya'll be beheaded for lese majeste."

The ones who warned the maids are rabbitkin male soldiers who seem to be newcomers.
Their titles are [Former Explorers], they're probably people who came from the Labyrinth City Selbira.

"Really?"
"Even though they're this cute, amazing!"
"Soft and fluffy~"

The half doubting maids are hugging and touching Tama and Pochi even while being surprised.
Both Tama and Pochi are happily being affable.

"It's the Magic Spear Liza-sama!"
"Would she practice with us during her stay? Would she?"
"I want her to teach me the Magic Edge's knack."
"Liza-san is awesome. She's a noble even though she's a lizardfolk, even more it's baronet."
"Yeah, someday we too--"

The soldiers sent passionate eyes to Liza who appeared after Tama and Pochi.
It feels that there are more beastfolks and scalekin than humans among the new soldiers.

◇

"It appears the cityscape has become quite lively."
"Yeah, thanks to your efforts."

Led to the drawing room of Muno castle, we're having a talk with Nina-san while waiting for Earl Muno to come.
Apparently Earl Muno is doing something in the City Core area under the city with Orion-kun.

"By efforts, do you mean the thing about food and human resources

collection in the Duchy Capital?"
"Yeah, of course that helped too, but it's not just that."

Nina-san shook her head while smiling wryly.

"Thanks to your activities in the Labyrinth City and the Royal Capital, Muno Earldom has become more recognized. We had a rapid increase in the number of government service applicants and merchants who came here."

Looking at the map, the population in the city has risen by 50%, and the total population in the territory by 20%.
The soldiers who were only 120 now have become around 2000 just in the standing army.
Looking at the population ratio, I think the increase is a bit too much, but Ms. Nina probably has some plan about it.

"By the way, Satou. Do you know how many towns and cities are there in Muno Earldom?"

I hesitate how to answer to Ms. Nina's question.

There are two cities under Muno Earldom, Muno city and another along the main road.
Some of the places that I thought to be villages seem to be towns.

These towns specialize in Gabo fruit productions, they only have a few inhabitants.
The surplus crops from the agricultural villages around the towns are bought by the purveyors and then transported to Muno city.
The towns have no governors, apparently they dispatch civil officials from commoners as the magistrates.

"There are four cities and seven towns in this earldom. Among them, one

city and two towns are under Earl Muno's rule, three towns are under the local clans' rule, and the rest are occupied by monsters and savage tribes."

Ms. Nina who got tired waiting for my answer answered ahead, I checked the map.

There's a blank area near the territory located on a different map from Muno territory I visited before, three cities and two towns are located there.
These are not under control of the lord, so it's in another map.

Among these, two cities are under control of fiendish upper level 50s undead type monsters, two towns have become the nests of level 40 hydras and chimeras.
The savage tribe that Ms. Nina mentioned is probably about the kobolds who occupy the abandoned mine city in the mountain district.
Just like Goblins and Orcs, Kobolds are not monsters but a fairykin.

"And so. Now that we have the military power, soon, I'm thinking of taking back the control of the three towns who are occupied by those clans as they please--"

I see, so she wants us to lend our power to take those back.

So I thought, but Ms. Nina was thinking something a bit different.

"--Before that, we have a problem. The kobolds from the abandoned mine city have begun to meddle with the silver mine located in Kuhanou Earldom to the northeast you see."

That's troublesome.

If worst comes to worst, Earl Kuhanou might destroy the kobolds and snatch the territory.

"In other words, you want me to prevent the kobolds from attacking the mine?"
"Yeah, that's right. I'd like Satou and the others to drive away the kobolds that are heading toward the mine."
"Is it alright to just drive them away?"

I thought she would tell me to drive them out of the abandoned mine city.

"Hauto will take care of the abandoned mine city. With 500 territorial army and 1500 mercenaries, we should be able to subdue the kobolds. The mercenaries have been provided by Echigoya Firm."

I haven't heard that one--or so I wanted to say, but I feel that I saw a report about mercenaries deployment.
Looking up the reports I got from Tifaliza, there were documents about some hectic things in Yowok Kingdom and Holy State Parion.
It seems they've gathered refugees in Lesseu Earldom and brought them to Oyugock Dukedom through ships.
The population growth and the soldiers must be of those families.

It might be just right for Muno Earldom that's lacking manpower.

◇

"Heya, I've kept you waiting, Satou-kun."

Earl Muno appeared with his usual friendly manner.

"I'm back~?"
"Baron, I'm back nanodesu!"
"Oh! I'm happy that Tama-kun and Pochi-kun look healthy."

Without correcting Pochi's mistake, Earl Muno lifts both of them while smiling his whole face.
As usual he's an animal lover.

"Father, you're terrible desuwa."

Lady Karina whose reunion hug got put off puffed her cheeks a bit.

"Karina, welcome back. Did you get along well with Satou-sama?"
"Soruna-anesama!"

The eldest daughter of Earl Muno who appeared later, Lady Soruna hugs Lady Karina.
The objects that had lost their places to go between the two deformed with enough force to lift the continent.

"Satou-san, you're staring too much you know?"

Sera who circled around to block my lets out a sweet smile.

"Fast"
"Late start."

The impregnable guard pair whose appearance was stolen muttered, "Sera, what a frightening girl" vexingly.

"Sir Pendragon, looks like you're in good health."

Appearing behind Lady Soruna is the little brother of Lady Soruna and Lady Karina, the eldest son of Earl Muno and the next Earl, Orion-kun.
There's a subdued beautiful girl that I'm not familiar with next to him.
She's 15 year old just like him.

"Let me introduce her, she's my fiancee, Muse the daughter of Baron Ragock."

Orion-kun introduced the girl.
When I was in the Duchy Capital, there was a talk about his marriage with Sera's seven year old little sister of different mother, so she's probably a candidate for the second wife.

"Nice to meet you, Muse-sama. I am Viscount Satou Pendragon."
"N-nice to meet you Viscount-sama. I-I'm honored to be able to see you."

She seemed to be a reserved person, she greeted while looking very nervous.

"Muse-sama, you don't need to be that tense."
"Eh? Se-Sera-sama?! Why are you here?"

When miss Muse looked at Sera who talked to her to loosen her tension, she hardened more than when she greeted me.

"Sir Pendragon, why is the next saintess-sama here?"

Orion-kun whispered to me.
By next saintess-sama, he's probably referring to Sera.

"Did you not hear from Earl Muno? I've been appointed to be the vice minister of Shiga Kingdom's Tourism Ministry, so Sera accompanies me as an attendant."
"V-vice minister?"

Apparently, he only heard about me becoming a viscount.

Someone who coughs, seemingly purposely, behind me is the other attendant, Princess Shistina.

"Sir Pendragon, is the lady also your acquaintance?"

The fussy Orion-kun asked while looking annoyed.
He probably feels that I'm imprudent to take many women of blooming age along.

"This lady is another attendant of vice minister the same as Sera-sama--"
"Ara, it's not the same."

Princess Shistina gets up from the sofa and stands beside me.

"Nice to meet you Orion-dono. I'm the sixth princess of Shiga Kingdom, Shistina. I'm Satou's fiancee."
""P-princess""

Orion-kun and miss Muse were surprised at the same time.
Best of all, the princess's impact was too strong it seemed they ignored the fiancee part.

Before their shock settled down, I introduced the reserved Zena-san to Orion-kun and the others.

◇

"Now then, let's continue the talk from earlier."

Leaving the women in the drawing room, I, Arisa, Ms. Nina, and Orion-kun went together to Earl Muno's office. Of course with the Earl too.

"Please wait, Nina-dono."
"What is it? Next lord-dono."

"Please stop with the next lord-dono. More importantly! Why did you bring along a child to this political meeting, Sir Pendragon!"

Orion-kun pointed out Arisa of course.
Arisa herself watched the situation in delight.

"I called for Arisa-dono."

The one who answered him was not me, it was Ms. Nina.

"Many of the earldom's revival policies came from her suggestions. If you're deceived by her childish appearance, your caliber as a viceroy would be doubted you know?"

Orion-kun who was talked down by Ms. Nina kept silent while groaning, "Gununu".

I think it's impossible to see through Arisa's inner capability in your first meeting.
I protected Orion-kun in my mind.

The meeting advanced smoothly even though there was one such trouble.

Until halfway--.

"Then, Satou and the others would arrest or repulse the kobolds who went to the silver mine, is that okay with you?"
"Yes, understood."

I agree with Ms. Nina.

"Wait, why should it be arrest or repulse? Your retainers are strong enough to beat down those riff-raff right? Why wouldn't you just dispose the insurgents who damaged the territory right then and there?"

Orion-kun asked me in an angry tone.
Looks like he'll get angry If I honestly tell him that I don't want to kill them.

"In the short-term, what Orion-sama's said is the most efficient one."

Arisa looks at Orion-kun while smiling.

"That is right! Your retainer also said so--"
"However, if we so easily slaughter them, in the long term it'll leave a deep after-effect on the populace and become the seed that will obstruct the territory's development."

It's a case that happens often in the middle east in our former world.

"But, with weak attitude--"
"Quite so."

Arisa affirmed without listening to Orion-kun's rebuttal to the end.

"Therefore, I'd like to suggest another plan before doing the plan to repulse them."

After smiling at Orion-kun, Arisa tells her plan to Ms. Nina and Earl Muno.

"In order to keep the naughty kids from ever thinking of rebelling again, let's engrave the fear deep into their bones."
"Please don't be too hard (on them) okay."

While smiling wryly, Ms. Nina reminded Arisa who finished with a scary smile.
For some reason, Ms. Nina's line of sight was turned toward Orion-kun.

14-17. Muno Earldom (2)

*

Satou's here. I've heard that saving the heroine in a pinch is a requirement of being a hero. Recently, I feel that there are a lot of heroines who save the protagonists instead.

◇

The next day, we departed on the airship with Orion-kun and two of his attendants.
My companions are all the vanguard and Mia, five of them.

Lady Karina wanted to go, but I made her to stay in order to let her socialize with her sister-in-law, miss Muse.
I asked Sera to support the two.

I had asked Princess Shistina, Arisa and Zena-san to investigate the library in the former Muno castle so they also got left behind.
I'm told that most of the books have been scattered and lost, but the castle seems to be older than the kingdom itself, there might be some important documents remaining.

Lulu is teaching Gelt and other cooks the recipes she has learned in the Royal Castle and our journey.
I expect that the tourist attractions in Muno city will increase even a bit.

◇

Along the way, we stopped by a pioneer village called Pendragon village.

The former boy thief gang and the elderly who were abandoned near the river are living here.

I built the village provisionally, but it seems they've properly developed housings and fields during this one year.

"Uwah, it's a ship flying in the sky."
"Flyiing."
"Awesome."

Children began to gather when the airship lowered its altitude.

There's no place to land, so I descend to the ground using a rope ladder.
We're only going to see them for a bit, so only I, Pochi, and Tama get down.

"Viscount-sama!"
"Everyone! Chevalier-sama has come!"
"Waa, it's Tama-chan and Pochi-chan!"

Following after the nimble children, the elderly also totteringly gather around.
Both the children and the elderly look more healthy than when we met them before.

"Young organisms, conferring candy so I communicate."
"It's Nana~"
"I'm caught~"
"Candy tasty"

Nana who had come down before I realized it was already giving candy to the children.
The youngest child is being carried by Nana in high spirit while giggling happily.

After looking at them, I called the elderly.

"Excuse me for my long silence. This has become a splendid village isn't it."
"It's all thanks to chevalier-sama who had put up good words to viceroy-sama."

An old man who has assumed the position of the village chief talks politely.
It seems he was originally a civil official so he's fit for the job.

Liza brings down two barrels as the souvenirs.

"This one is a distilled liquor called『Giant's Tear』, while this barrel has smoked meat inside."
"Oh! We're having a feast today!"
"We're holding a feast for Satou-sama!"
"It is time to show off my edible plant dumpling."
"Hmph, my fried dumplings are better."

I feel sorry for the old men and women who are getting frolic, but since we only come here to see them for a bit, we can't participate in the feast.

"That's too bad. Please wait a minute, I'm gonna wrap them up quick."

An old woman who looked disappointed went back to her hut and began to do something.
She's making a lunch box made of the so-called edible plant dumplings.

And then some senior boys carrying crude bows ran out of the forest.

"Satou-sama! Are Totona and the others working hard in the castle? This is a pheasant I caught myself you see. Please take it."

"This ear rabbit too!"
"Hou, these are some excellent spoils."

I receive the pheasant and rabbit from the boys who look so proud about it, and then I present them with short bows and arrows I took out of the magic bag.
I made these bows and arrows myself, but they're just extremely common items.

"Waa, amazing."
"They're genuine bows and arrows!"

The hunter boys' eyes are sparkling before the bows and arrows.

"C-can we really take these?"
"Of course, please use these to hunt good game for everyone in the village."
"Leave it to me! Satou-sama!"
"Un, I'll do my best too!"

After encouraging the boys and getting an edible plant dumpling lunch box, we promptly left the pioneer village.
The edible plant dumplings which we enjoyed from the airship's viewing deck were simple but it tasted somewhat nostalgic.

◇

"Emer~gency~?"
"Master, this is bad nanodesu."

When I was giving a lecture to Orion-kun about the actual scenery of Muno Earldom in contrast with the map from the airship's deck, Tama

and Pochi rushed from the bow.

"What's wrong?"
"Pinch."
"In the forest ahead, being chased nodesu!"

Checking the direction Tama and Pochi pointed at, I understand that a flock of small sized monsters called Snake Bats are chasing several people.
These Snake Bats are monsters with snake body and one-meter-long bat wings, when it's alone, even a normal soldier can defeat it safely.
However, they have paralyzing poison, so if they're in a group, even a knight will be in danger.

Of course, we're talking about a normal knight here.

"Pochi, Tama, I permit you two to sortie."
"Roger~"
"Yes nanodesu!"

Hearing my order, the two jumped off from the deck.

"Uwah! O-oy! Sir Pendragon, your retainers are!"

Seeing that, Orion-kun rushed to the handrail in shock.

Fwoosh, with a sound of cloth spreading, Tama shows herself on the port side.
Like a giant flying squirrel, she glided to the direction she reported earlier.

"A p-person, in the sky?!"
"Because she's a ninja."

I suitably answered Orion-kun's scream.

And then, boom, there was a big sound below.
Pochi probably landed on the ground.

Even though the airship's altitude was low, even Pochi would have gotten hurt at this height.
With Sky Step skill, a lower order skill of Sky Drive, she probably made footholds in the air and killed her falling speed.
It's plain compared to Tama's ninjutsu, but it looks like Pochi is steadily improving too.

Pochi runs while leaving cloud of dust behind.
She's about as quick as a car.

"Liza, to the port side."
"Understood."

I told Liza who was in charge of the steering wheel to turn the airship to where Tama had gone.

"Those children, just what are...."
"It seems they found some people being chased by monsters in that forest."
"--From this distance?"

I handed a telescope to Orion-kun who couldn't believe it.

◇

"Dog-head? Aren't they Kobolds?"
"Yes, that seems to be the case."

I affirmed the question of Orion-kun who was peeking from behind me.

Pochi and Tama have saved the daughter of Kobold clan's head and her two male and female attendants.
The rescue drama was already over when we arrived, so I don't know the detail.

Orion-kun expressed them as [Dog-heads], but they're more like people who put on a dog-head headdress on their head.
Asides from their slightly long canine teeth and slightly pointed ears, they don't look that different from humans.
Their skin are just a bit too white and bluish.

Since there were seven corpses of the Kobolds in the forest, I moved there in secret with Unit Arrangement and collected them.

"Awaken~?"
"Are you hurt anywhere nodesu?"
"....N? Is it Kyan?"

Tama and Pochi who sensed the Kobold girl waking up peeked at her face.

The girl uttered words in Shiga language.
I thought it was my chance to get Kobold language, how unfortunate.

"--You're not, who are you?"
"Awawa, nanodesu."

The girl jumped and pinned Pochi's arms behind, looking alert toward us.
Tama jumped back at once.

I think Pochi should be able to easily escape the grasp, but she's probably afraid to hurt the girl if she forcefully shakes her off.

Pochi's troubled face looks cute, but I can't leave this as is.

"Let go of her arms. These girls are your saviors."
"Ah--"

The girl lost her power with my words, so I quickly tear Pochi off her.
This is most likely an assistance from the [Abduction] skill.

"Kuh, where is my comrades--don't tell me."

Using 'Setsu' to refer herself, that's quite unusual.

If Arisa was here, she would have shouted "You think you're samurai!" no doubt.
No wait, that one is "Sessha" eh.

Now then, putting aside the girl's first person name-calling, it seems she's misunderstood that her friends are all killed, I'll clear that up first.

"Two of your bodyguards are fine. They were dying, but my magician friend has patched them up."
"I-is that so, you have my gratitude."

It'd be troubling if the adult Kobolds suddenly acted violently, so, after Mia had healed their serious wounds, I put them under [Anaesthesia] and [Force Sleep] magic and let them sleep on the napping room below.

Then Mia appeared from the lower floor.

"E-elf-sama?!"

When the girl found Mia, she went to Mia and fell down prostrating.
It's like she's doing a dogeza.

"I-I am an heiress of the late Bolflos, Piaz Bolflos"
『I'm the youngest elf of Boruenan Forest, the daughter of Lamisauya and Lilinatoa, Misanalia Boruenan.』

The girl introduced herself in fairy language and then Mia formally introduced herself too after nodding slightly.

"Misanalia-sama, I thank you for the mercy you have given to my comrades."

The girl continues to talk while her forehead is still on the floor.
Even though she's saying thanks, it feels like she's challenging someone to a serious match, or rather, she seems desperate.

"And, please forgive my impudence for wishing for another thing before I could return the favor--"

Summarizing the girl's story: the Kobold's mine had been exhausted, they ran out of gems called Blue Crystal needed for their breeding, so she'd like to have some of that Blue Crystal from Mia.

Mia tilted her face, looking confused.
She probably has no idea about that Blue Crystal.

Still, gems from an abandoned mine huh....

--Nn?

"Perhaps, the Kobolds attacked Kuhanou Earldom becaused they wanted that Blue Crystal?"
"That is so. We were told by a traveling magician about it."

While asking the girl, I search Kuhanou Earldom's silver mine.
I also tried searching for the unexplored mines, but I couldn't find the

vein of this Blue Crystal.

"Are you really sure?"
"That I do not know. We cannot carelessly believe a weaselfolk magician, but upon completion, we promised to teach them the way to manufacture Blue Steel. Those greedy bunch should not miss that opportunity."

Geh, weasel again huh.

I'm slightly intrigued with that Blue Steel thing, I'll help them a bit.

I'll leave Mia to take care of the girl, and use [Telephone] magic to connect to Boruenan forest.

『Aze-san, could I have a bit of your time?』
『Satou! Of course you can.』
『Are you familiar with this gem called Blue Crystal?』

I asked about the Blue Crystal to Aze-san who sounded a bit lively.
Of course I'm talking in my mind, so the surrounding people can't hear it.

『Yes, I know about it. If I'm not mistaken, it's needed for Kobold's child raising isn't it?』
『The Kobold's mine has been exhausted, so they're in trouble. Do you know what kind of place this Blue Crystal occur at?』
『Umm, let me see--it should be deep in Mithril veins. I think you can get them along the deep part where the Dragon Vein is thick.』

I got to hear more detailed information than I thought, so I thanked Aze-san along with loving words and then I cut the call.

I don't know where this Dragon Vein is located, but since it should be connected to Sources, I'll check the core of towns and cities.
After checking Muno Earldom, I found out that there was an ore vein in

the town where the monsters had build their nest.
There's a Mithril vein about 1KM deep under the city, and there are Blue Crystal along the crevices there.

That town is in a mountain district located between the hidden village of the giants and the Kobold town.

While I was at it, I tried searching the Mithril vein in the black dragon Heiron's mountain and the one in the dwarf's Bolhart dominion, I only found the Blue Crystals in the former.

The easiest way is to tell the Kobolds about the Blue Crystal in the Black Dragon Mountain which also means driving them away from the territory, but taking the profit for Muno Earldom into consideration, it'll be better if we gain allegiance of the Kobolds who hold the technique to mine and refine these special metal and also let them mine and refine the Mithril vein.

I call Arisa in Muno Castle with [Telephone] magic, and tell her to match the information about the ore vein.

"Satou."

Mia who looks like she's about to cry clings to me.
There's a desperate Kobold girl behind her.

That reminds me, I let Mia to handle her didn't I.

"Satou-dono, I beseech you! Send us to Boruenan forest with your airship. We will give you Kobold's treasured sword, 『Blue Fang』 as a reward for your assistance! If you so desire, I will make a promise to teach you the method to manufacture Blue Steel."
"That manufacturing method sounds attractive. However, we're currently in the middle of an official duty. We will help you obtain the Blue Crystal

after we've accomplished our duty."
"Are you sure?!"

I assuredly nod back to the girl who's half in doubt.

14-18. Muno Earldom (3)

*

Satou's here. I dislike war. I don't mean that it will become peaceful if we just throw away weapons and decrease military might, but I think it's better if there are less casualties. It'll be nice if it's like in games where it can be settled in a war with no one dying.

◇

"Viceroy-sama! The third tower has been destroyed! Knight Gauen and Knight Juran have been made captives."
"If those two got done in, that means normal knights won't be a match for them..."
"You fools! This is not a knight match, it's a war! Push them with number! Distract their attentions with archers."

The domineering viceroy rebuked the timid staff officers.
He's the viceroy of the second city of Kuhanou Earldom, Sedam, that's near the silver mine the Kobolds are attacking.

I've come to ask him for the permission to intervene in the war against the Kobolds, but it's hard to call out to him.
Perhaps I should go out and come here again later.

I slipped out of the scouting ridge where the viceroy was, caught some suitable soldier and applied for a meeting with the viceroy.
Going out would be annoying, so I just skipped a few procedures.

"Visitation at a busy time like this?!"

The viceory's shout reached downstairs.

"What?! A retainer of Muno Earldom huh! If he's asking to be patronized at a time like this, I'll cut his neck."

Soldier A who's beside me averts his gaze awkwardly.
The viceroy probably purposely said it like that so I could hear it as a restraint.

After a bit, Soldier B came down and took me and Tama to the viceroy.
Of course we left the weapons we had on hands to the soldiers.

"Are you the retainer of Earl Muno? Having a catkin as your page, you've got some bad taste."

I was offended with a first discriminatory remark in a long while, but then I remembered that the discrimination of demi-humans was quite bad north of Muno territory.

"I'm honored to meet you, Viceroy-sama. In regard of the Kobolds that are troubling your excellency--"
"Hmph, are you saying that you're going to single handedly take care of them?"
"Immediately if you'd allow."

I turned a fearless smile to the viceroy who was going to say that it was impossible.
For some reason, Tama who was dressed as a page beside me also mimicked my expression.

"I'll give you half a koku time. If you show me that you can do something about it during that period, I'll give you my thanks."
"Thank you very much."

Normally speaking, even just gathering your force would need a few

hours.
Even if I'm challenging them with a few elites, we can't probably gain complete control over the Kobolds who are currently in deadlock against Kuhanou force in half a koku--about one hour.

"Tama, I'm counting on you."
"Don't worry be happy~ nin nin~"

Tama entered ninja mode and then she disappeared.
I gave instructions to everyone using [Telephone] magic to begin to clean up the Kobolds.

"W-what is that!"
"Pe-people are, no, the dog-heads are fluttering in the air."

Two of the viceroy staff officers couldn't keep up with the absurd scene happening in the battlefield.

The beastkin girls on the frontline are catching and throwing the Kobolds to the air.
No matter how strong the girls are, their strength is not this absurd.

The thing that's helping them doing the act is a simple type of Acceleration Circle I've given them.
It was originally a technique I thought up when Pochi and Tama were having fun with the shooting experiment in the desert, but I'll keep that a secret in order to protect the Kobold warriors' dignity.

Mia's Artificial Spirits, Arachnes that are standing are spinning spiderwebs 100 meter back to absorb the impact of the thrown Kobolds and capture them.
Just to be safe, I let Nana to guard the airship and Mia.

Through the space magic [Tactic Talk] that's still connected to the girls, I

can hear the screams filled with fear and angry roar from the Kobolds who are getting overran by the beastkin girls.

The job is complete while still leaving a lot of time in the half a koku time the viceroy put as a term.

『We've completed the suppression.』
『Good job, take the next action.』
『Understood! Pochi Tama let's go.』
『Hoi hoi~』
『Yes nanodesu!』

I ordered the beastkin girls with [Telephone] to collect the Kobolds who couldn't fight anymore before they went back.

It seems there are several captive Kobolds in the torture room of Kuhanou army.
I'll leave it to Tama to take care of that.

『Tama, sorry but I'm giving you an additional mission.』
『Don't worry be happy~』

I tell Ninja Tama the torture room's location, and then I begin the next action in order to assist her.

"Vi-viceroy-sama, a huge monster from the forest!"
"All members, evacuate! Just leave those Kobolds and evacuate!"

The viceroy and the staff officers were surprised when they saw the artificial spirit Behemoth appearing from behind the mountain in Muno territory.
I created that Behemoth, but for some reason it's bigger than the ones Mia and Aze-san summoned.

The attention in the fort are all gathered to the Behemoth.

"Viceory-sama, please don't worry. That's a spirit my companions have asked for help."
"Th-that's not a monster?!"
"Yes, it's going to exterminate the Kobolds that have escaped from the fort."

Although I said that it was going to eliminate, the Kobolds in the field had all been captured, the Arachnes had put them outside Kuhanou territory per Mia's instructions.
That Behemoth is an excuse so that they won't demand the Kobolds to be taken into their custody after the battle.

The Behemoth has finished moving, it's showing its side to us here.
We're about 300 meters apart.

"Viceroy-sama. It's going to be a bit dazzling and noisy, please take care."

After I've warned him, the Behemoth executes its race-specific ability, [Great Thunder].
Our purpose this time is for intimidation, I've lowered the power to lessen the environmental damage.

The thorns on Behemoth's body stretch and then lighting powerful enough to whiten the sky shoot out from them.

"""WOOO!"""
"""Eyes, my eyeeeeees"""

It looks like, besides the viceroy, there were only a few people who heeded my warning even though I had warned them beforehand.

The thunderous sound hit our ears and the smell of ozone swept on our

hair and clothes.
The ionized air stimulates my skin.

"Wh-what is that."
"Such power from just one attack...."

The viceroy and staff officer gasped when they saw the scarred ground left by the Great Thunder.
About 1km of the mountain forest straight from the Behemoth are carbonized in 45 degree cone shape.

Behemoth calmly walks on that black road while clad in small electrical discharges.

The frontline of Kuhanou force fall in silent due to the excessive spectacle.

I faintly saw Tama taking the Kobolds away from the fort on the corner of my vision. They've disappeared into the trees, it should be alright now.

"It seems we overdid it. I wanted to capture several Kobolds to find out their strongholds...."

I tried talking to the Viceroy, but he looks like he'll drop his jaw, he just keeps staring at the battlefield with no response.

Looks like I really overdid it.

"--Viceroy-sama?"
"A-ah....Yo-you've done well...."

I offered a chair to the Viceroy who's still in shock, and then, thump, he dropped down to the chair like he had lost his power.

"--We should have several Kobold captives. I'll give them to you as a reward. Take them."
"Then, I'll gratefully accept them."

Looks like he heard me even though he looked stupefied.
Tama had infiltrated and save them already, but I feel less guilty now that I've gotten the permission.

I presented a weapon that was in the soldier's custody to the viceroy.

"Although this may not be enough as a thank, this is a present from my Viceroy."
"I-isn't' this the rumored magic spear of Echigoya Firm! Earl Kuhanou told me that he needs to wait for one year even after pulling his connections in the Royal Capital--are you sure?"
"Yes, of course."

It ended up like we took the viceroy's deeds so it was to make up for it, though it also served as a compensation for the trouble we caused them. The soldiers will probably have busy days ahead of them with repairing the fort, but since no one loses their live, let's think of it to be a good outcome.

◇

"--Piaz, you traitor!"
"A-aniue, you misunderstand!"
<TLN: aniue= 'Esteemed older brother'.>

After the captured Kobolds were brought by Mia's spider-shaped artificial spirits, Arachnes, a siblings quarrel began when we went back to the airship.

"Master~"
"Misunderstanding is happening it's bad nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi are beside the quarreling siblings, they look flustered and confused as to what should they do.

I stop the Kobold older brother from talking with wind magic [Seal Talk].

It's originally a magic used for sealing magicians' chant.
It's often used in crimes, so it's not written in general magic books.

"Now then, Piaz's older brother. For the sake of you Kobolds' future, shall we go ask Earl Muno's permission."

I said so and then the airship levitated.

I put the Kobold soldiers and the Arachnes in a sub-space using [Another World] magic during the flight.
I'd feel sorry if they got eaten by monsters if I left them as is.
I thought of giving them to a fort between the two territories, but there were only 50 soldiers in the fort while there were 200 robust Kobold soldiers, managing them would be hard for them so I decided against it.
The Kobold soldiers are inside the Arachnes' cocoons, so they should not notice that they're inside the sub-space.

Orion-kun's attitude toward the beastkin girls has become strangely polite, I don't know whether it's because he was shocked by the Behemoth's lightning attack, or because he was surprised with the throwing of Kobolds.

◇

"You've gone and done quite the spectacle."
"Yes, after doing such a senseless thing, the people of Kuhanou Earldom won't imagine that the Kobolds who were attacking the mine are safe."

When we got back to Muno Castle, I was called by Earl Muno and Ms. Nina.
Tama took a letter to Ms. Nina to tell her about the situation ahead of time when the airship was doing the landing sequence.

"I'm told that the Kobolds were deceived by a weaselkin magician to attack Kuhanou Earldom in search of some Blue Crystal thing, is that right?"
"There is no mistake."
"If the Blue Crystal really does not exist in that silver mine, that is so."

The Kobold little sister and older brother who are tied affirm Ms. Nina's question.

I took only these siblings to Muno castle because they're the children of Bolflos clan's patriarch.
Judging from the things I've heard from the Kobold little sister during the flight, the older brother is the leader of the radical faction, while the little sister is the leader of the moderate faction, and the patriarch who should have unify the two is in sickbed.

"Master! We've made a huge discovery!"

Right then, Arisa together with the princess appeared.
The timing was perfect because I instructed Arisa through [Telephone].

"It's said that there's a Mithril vein under the town of Tagenkoumi!
There's also a record about some unknown blue gem!"

The document Arisa is holding is something I've prepared and made to

look worn out with [Weathering] magic.

"This is quite convenient isn't it, Viscount?"
"Right isn't it. It seems that fortune is on their side."

I elude Ms. Nina calling me [Viscount] full of doubt with [Poker Face] skill and receive the document from Arisa.

"This document seems to be something from the era of Marquis Muno. Apparently they secretly dug it at that time. Judging from the time, the killing of Marquis Muno by『No Life King』probably happened before they could do a full-scale mining operation and so it went to a standstill."

The [Deception] skill is exploding after a long time.
I think it's running wildly since I haven't used it for a long time.

"I see--You, what's your name?"
"Keiji. The next patriarch, Keiji Bolflos."

After pondering for a bit, Ms. Nina asks the Kobold older brother.

"I'll offer you two choices. One, for the crime of treason, your whole clan is to be executed or deported from Muno Earldom. The other one, the Kobolds are to retake the occupied town for Earl Muno, become the people of Tagenkoumi, and provide the work force to acquire the underground resource."
"Are you going to turn us all into slaves?"

After hearing Ms. Nina, the Kobold older brother shouted like he was barking while baring his fangs.

"If we did that, Satou would turn his back on us. This guy is softhearted you see. If we did such a thing to you guys, he'd take you all to a new land, I'd even bet on this."

Yup, I can't refute Ms. Nina on that.
If that really happened, I probably would take the Kobolds to the Mithril vein in the Black Dragon Mountain behind the scenes.

"That's why it's going to be『Inhabitants』. Normally, I'd like to entrust the patriarch to be the governor, but there was the thing with the『Kobolds attacking』Kuhanou Earldom's silver mine. We can't instate him immediately. Just like the dwarves, spend your time and gradually become a self-governing dominion."

After hearing Ms. Nina, the Kobold older brother contemplates.

"Thank you for your kindness. I will absolutely persuade the patriarch and the elders."
"I'll also help anija to unify the clan's will."
<TLN: Old expression to say "older brother".>

The Kobold siblings replied Ms. Nina passionately.

"Is that alright with you, Earl Leon?"
"Umu, I give you my consent."

Earl Muno generously nodded to Ms. Nina.

"Well then we should hasten exterminating the monsters from Tagenkoumi town."
"Then, let us Kobold soldiers lead the frontline!"

The Kobold older brother came forward while still being tied.
There's no mistake that freeing the town from the monsters should be done by the cooperation of the Kobolds and Muno Earldom's army.

However, that means they will have to plan the draft for the military march and the arrangement for the unification of two forces, huge tasks

await them.
It'll need several months even at the fastest, or even half a year if it's done badly.

I think they can do it somehow even without us if we just curtail the boss class monsters that rule the town, but leaving them, saying "Pardon me for going ahead", right before a great task would be heartless of me.

"Earl Muno, we have our sightseeinig job, however--"
"Sir Pendragon!"

Orion-kun turned back toward me while looking like he couldn't believe it.
Yet, when our eyes met he lowered his eyes as if he was frightened.
...Incomprehensible.

"Orion, you must not be unreasonable okay."
"It's as Earl Muno said. In just a day, Viscount Pendragon settled the probable dispute with Kuhanou Earldom and found a definite solution today, afterward, we just need to make it happen. If we relied even more after so much, we'd better off yielding our position as statesmen to him too."

Orion-kun was remonstrated by Earl Muno and Ms. Nina added.

"You two, please wait. I cannot join the united front since I have a sightseeing job to do, but we will recapture Tagenkoumi town at least. How about performing the united front for when you need to recapture the other towns and cities?"
"You say it as if it's so easy."
"Is such a thing possible?"

Ms. Nina muttered in astonishment, Earl Muno asked like he couldn't believe it.

"I have some excellent companions. If we're with those girls, saving Tagenkoumi town and exterminating the monsters will be a walk in the park."

It's already afternoon though.

<TLN: The idiom "Walk in the park" is literally written "Before breakfast" in Japanese.>

14-19. Muno Earldom (4)

*

Satou's here. A senpai told me that trust is like falling dominoes. Apparently how you endure the stress that pile up little by little and how easy it can be broken by a single misstep resemble them.

◇

"Airships really are fast aren't they."
"Father, for both the viceroy and his heir to go to the danger zone, isn't that too reckless!"

The people who are participating in the recapture plan of [Tagenkoumi Town] occupied by monsters are the members of team Pendragon, Earl Muno, Orion-kun, Sir Zotor who's made a comeback as a knight, and the Kobold siblings.
<TLN: It should be town instead of city, previous chapter has been corrected.>

That's good and all, but Orion-kun has been disputing seriously with Earl Muno since awhile ago.

"It's not recklessness. We're with Satou-kun and his companions, we'll be safe anywhere we go."
"Leave it to me~?"
"That's right nanodesu! Pochi will defeat things like dangers like 'zumbararin' nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi replied Earl Muno's fully trusting speech by taking shutan poses.

After looking at his father frustratingly, Orion-kun went to the deck with

heavy steps.
From his point of view, if I were ambitious, I'd make it so that the two died by monsters' hands and took control of the territory, he was probably trying to warn his father about that.
It sounds rude, but being cautious like Orion-kun is normal.

I like people who are trusting, without being vigilant, like Earl Muno though.

"Master, flying-type monsters are approaching from the front."
"Master, permission to intercept!"

Liza reported, Nana bent herself forward and asked for my permission.
Looking at the map, I understand that there are countless monsters aiming for the airship from afar.

"Alright, permission granted. Arisa, please take the initiative with fire magic."
"Okkey."
"Master, I--"
"Lulu, please help sniping using the normal bullets."
"Yes!"
"Mia, please prepare the Garuda."
"Nn, leave it to me."

I stop the two Muno from following everyone to the viewing deck.
We have special seats for watching spectacles over the windshield in this cockpit.

Like a cloud, swarming monsters are dyeing the sky black.
It's merely a show since they're all small fries, but it's quite the visual effect. Like in a dream.

"S-so many of them...."

"A-aniue."

The kobold siblings are getting frightened by the approaching monster swarm.

It's understandable.
With so many of them, they look like a swarm of fly or locust, it looks gross.

"T-this is impossible. Sir Pendragon! What are you doing looking so flippant! Turn back the ship immediately! We can't possibly win against such a swarm!"

--'Flippant', how rude.

There was a time when Orion-kun seemed to be scared of me after the Behemoth matter, but it seemed the terror before his eyes had overwritten that, he snarled at me desperately.

"It's alright. We have Arisa here."
"What can a little girl who's only good with her mouth--"

Orion-kun stopped his words halfway through.
He's probably surprised with the hellfire like flash that can be seen through the window.

The wide-ranged advanced level fire magic that Arisa used incinerated the monster swarm.
It's exactly a real life act of "Sterilize the garbage!"
<TLN: Fist of North Star's reference.>

It's a bit showy, but since it's a magic that the Selbira's Guildmaster can also easily use, it should be fine.
As expected, she didn't use the forbidden spells of the space magic and fire magic that she recently learned.

『Master, did you see? Arisa-chan's coolness!』
"Yeah, of course I did. Don't monopolize them too much okay."
『Ho~i』

I replied Arisa's [Praise me] call from the speaking tube, and reminded her not to cut loose.

Orion-kun who saw it from the side has hardened with his mouth open, but Earl Muno simply praises, "Arisa-kun's magic is amazing", while looking like usual.

The vast majority of the small fries had been burned by Arisa's magic earlier, while most of the remaining ones had gone back to the town. Some of the monsters that did try to approach us were all shot down by Lulu's sniping and the beastkin girls' Magic Edge Cannon.

The battle ended after a while and everyone got back here from the deck. Only Mia who has just finished summoning the Garuda remains on the deck.

"Oops."

I received Arisa who was in good mood after playing an active part, jumping to me while shouting like Pochi.

"....W-with such talent for magic...w-why are you merely a Viscount's retainer...You should have aimed to become the head of Shiga 33 Wands carrying an army directly under His Majesty."

Orion-kun who stiffened with a dumbfounded face until a while ago asked Arisa with a trembling voice.

"How stupid, of course that's because I'm madly in love with Master."

After speaking her love in Showa's way of talking, she cutely kissed my cheek lightly.
Furthermore, with doya face, she poked her own cheek requesting a kiss for her too, so I lightly kiss her like in Western drama to show affection.
<TLN: Search "doya-gao" or ドヤ顔 .>

"A, awawawa"

Arisa who got her kiss reward looks flustered.
She's weak against surprise attacks as usual.

After kissing Tama and Pochi who looked envious in turns, Nana came before me with a serious expression.
Maybe Nana also wants a kiss? So I thought, but it seems to be a bit different.

"Master, wishing for the mean to do long-range attacks."
"Okay. I'll take proper measures."

It seems all of the monsters have been shot down before they entered Nana's [Javelin]'s range.

Nana seemed to be convinced with my sincere answer.
The revived Arisa retorted, "Are you a politician!", but since Nana didn't mind it, I ignored her.

The airship lowers its altitude as it approaches the town.

The monsters inside the town seem to be frightened with Arisa's magic earlier, they're hiding behind the building without a sound.
It seems the shrewd monsters have ran away from the town by scaling the wall and the exit.

When we have crossed the outer wall, there's a sudden movement from

the castle ruin in the distant.

"Oh no~?"
"Master, look at that! Nanodesu."

Tama and Pochi who found the Hydra that showed its heads on the castle ruin made a racket.

"What is that big thing!"
"Looks like that's the boss here."

I told the surprised Orion-kun.

"I-if we just use the fire magic from earlier!"
"You can't."

I tell Orion-kun who's sending hopeful glances to Arisa that we can't accept that plan.

"Naturally~?"
"Magic is forbidden with hydra nanodesu."
"Master, please give us the permission to subjugate it in close combat."
"Master, permission to sortie!"

The vanguards agreed with my opinion and made a suggestion.
This is not because Hydra is resistant against fire magic.

"R-ridiculous. Why don't you fight by safely attacking it from a distance?"

The beastkin girls who are heading to the sortie catapult answer Orion-kun who's shaking his head finding it incomprehensible.

"Because, it's no good~?"
"That's right nanodesu. The meat will go bad nodesu."

"Hydra's meat is delicious. We cannot get the meat if we attack it carelessly."
"....What'd you say."

Looks like it's hard for Orion-kun to accept beastkin girls' explanations that are overflowing with appetite.
Nana has already sortied through acceleration magic circle from the catapult, she's not here now.

We have a lot of spectators today, so I let the ship to move close to the ground, making it going up and down.
Mia's Garuda that has gone ahead of everyone pins the Hydra to the ground.
And then the vanguards rush in one after another.

"It's a decisive battle of kaijuu."
"Pochi-chan and Tama-chan look like they're having fun."

Arisa and Lulu are in complete spectator mode.

"Umu, Pochi-kun and Tama-kun are strong on top of being cute aren't they."

Earl Muno also stands in a line with the two, enjoying the vanguards' actions.

For the fight this time, the one that has done the most is Pochi.
She cut down the Hydra's head one after another by using Magic Edge that she extended from her blade.

I'll give the right for the first fork stab of the Hydra's head grill to Pochi.

◇

Leaving the people who were watching the battle while holding their breath, I moved to the ground ahead with teleport magic.

"I guess it's around here?"

There are a lot of underground cavities from the treasure vaults and dungeons in the site of the castle ruin.
I pick a cavity that isn't close to the City Core and decide to make a tunnel hole with earth magic.

"I guess it'll look unnatural if there's a tunnel here suddenly."

While muttering to myself, I pick and use architecture magic from the Magic Column.
I installed a room and a bulk door with seal-like carving on the entrance of this underground tunnel.
In addition, I made them to look old using the [Weathering] magic I used on the document back then.

"Now then, I can finally start on the tunnel."

I've lost around five minute time, so let's do this quickly.

I dig a hole of around three meter big in diameter, and then I install a two meter spiral stair on the hole's side.
Of course I've included the hand rail to prevent falls.

I'm thinking of installing an elevator for transporting things on the center, so I've left it hollow.

As a precaution, I make an open space every 100 meters, moving pits out of the way.

I want to avoid lethal accidents from happening.

After continuing my work for about 10 minutes, I've finally penetrated to the silver vein and the pulsing Mithril ore area, and even connected to the place where there are Blue Crystal, our objective.
Just in case, I install a bulky door that leads to the Blue Crystal.

Just for appearance, let's put a powerful lock on the door.
Since I could set conditions with locking magic, I made a blue sapphire key for it, and put a condition where only the one that held it could go in.
It should be fine as long as I have the duplicate.

I leave this key in the first room.

After finishing all the work in fifteen minute time after the start of the battle, I stealthily teleported back to the airship.
It was just right after the Hydra was defeated, so I directed the airship toward the castle ruin.

◇

"Master, completed the removal of debris in front of the barrier, so I report."

As a thanks for Nana who did the labor, I promise her to do the magic power supplement for her before we go to sleep later.
The beastkin girls and the Garuda are currently eliminating the monsters that are lurking in the castle ruin.

"The barrier is holding up huh."
"Nn, active."

The barrier that prevents intrusion to the City Core seems to be functioning.
I feel that the barrier will be broken if I touch it, so I make sure not to get close to it.

"What should we do? Should we go ahead to check if there's any danger?"
"You can't! Only the viceroy and the next viceroy can enter here."

When I asked Earl Muno, Orion-kun cut himself between us and replied.

"It's alright Satou-kun. There are many things protecting me with the viceroy's power. Orion, you wait here with Satou-kun."
"Fa-father."
"This is an order."

After saying so, Earl Muno walked to the other side of the barrier alone.
Orion-kun tried to follow after him, but it seemed he was stopped by the barrier, he couldn't go inside.

Earl Muno probably used the City Core's power dwelling in the terminal to enter the barrier.

After a while, the crest of Earl Muno flashed on the barrier's surface for an instant.
He's probably seized the City Core of this town.

We wait for the Earl Muno while calming down the Kobold siblings who are pestering about the location of the Mithril vein.

"Heya, thanks for waiting. I have to decide on the proxy--governor of this town."

Earl Muno who came back said so and looked around.

"Liza-kun, can I ask you?"
"Me, is it? Isn't it more suitable for Master?"
"I've discussed this with Nina, Satou-kun has to be the lord of the abandoned mine city. I want to appoint you to be the governor of this town."
"As I am Master's attendant, I can't do the duties--"
"The actual rule will be entrusted to a chief administrator, there's no problem."

Liza is looking at me with an anxious expression, so give her my consent.

"Understood. I accept the duty as a governor."
"Is that so! Good. Then let's start the ceremony right away."

It seems there's no need to be close to the City Core to appoint the proxy.

Liza's governor appointment ceremony was finished with a simple spell.
It was similar to the [Conferring Peerage] ceremony that I went through.

◇

"So this a place for ceremony, I wonder if there's something here?"
"Found, a key~?"
"Master! There's a stairway here nodesu!"

The beastkin girls found the room that went to the Mithril tunnel, Tama also quickly found the key to the Blue Crystal room.

"It's quite deep."
"You're right."

The people who are going to go down with me are the beastkin girls, the Kobold siblings and Orion-kun, seven of us.
Mia and Arisa were interested, but they gave up after hearing about the long stairs.
I'll show the video recording to the girls later.

"Silver? Isn't this a silver vein!"

The exposed silver vein was glittering halfway through the stairs, the tension of Orion-kun who looked tired went up.

"If there's a silver vein, that means--"
"Yes! There might really be a Mithril vein close by!"

The Kobold siblings look happy.
Apparently, the two didn't believe about the Blue Crystal matter.

Approximately 600 meter deep, the exposed vein slightly changes to green color from the silver.

"It's Mithril! If we dig here, the Blue Crystal might be here too!"
"There must be! I'll go back to the top immediately and bring a pickaxe."

I'm sorry for the two who are ecstatic, but they won't find the Blue Crystal no matter how long they dig here.

"Wait. According to the document, they found the Blue Crystal in the innermost bed. Bring the pickaxe after we've checked that."

With my persuasion, the two stepped ahead as if hurrying us.
There's still about 400 meter more, but I can't say that.

The Kobold siblings who have run to the lowest layer run back to us.

Tama and Pochi are together with them too.

"There was a door-like thing below. Hand ov--please lend me the key that was found earlier."

The older brother Kobold who was speaking in commandeering tone due to his excitement changed to polite speech with a glare from Liza.

"That key should be able to open it, desu."
<TLN: He added desu as a sort of polite tone.>

The older brother Kobold's deduction was right, but since I went out of my way to put a gimmick in order to see their delighted reactions, I made him to endure it, saying, "Let's go with everyone."

When we arrived before the door, Orion-kun who was staggering after walking too much sat down on the ground.
It looks like he's implying that he can't move anymore.

"--I'm opening it!"

The older brother Kobold who took the key look back at us, asking for confirmation.
Even though he was excited a while ago, it seems he's insecure now that he's actually here.

I gave him my consent, and then the door made an opening sound.

"Aniue!"
"Yeah, with this our Bolflos will live on."

While being illuminated by the glittering Blue Crystal that spread before their eyes, the Kobold siblings take each other hands, crying full of joy.

While still sitting down, Orion-kun's eyes gleam seeing those glittering.

"Pretty~?"
"It's blue like the color of holy swords nanodesu."

Tama and Pochi are looking at the scene with sparkling eyes that won't lose to the Blue Crystal.
That's while both of them are being carried under Liza's arms though.

The older brother gave a lump of Blue Crystal to the little sister and then he knelt down before me.

"Sir Pendragon, we siblings--no, Bolflos Clan pledge eternal allegiance to you."

No no, you should do that to Earl Muno.
If you said such a misfired thing, Orion-kun would glare at you, you know.

"If you want to pledge your loyalty, please do it to Earl Muno."
"But--"
"If he didn't give his permission, you guys wouldn't have been able to get the Blue Crystal."
"....Understood. We will follow Sir Pendragon's words."

He somehow looks like he doesn't understand it, but there's no problem as long as he pledges their allegiance to Earl Muno.
The Kobold siblings went back to the ground while bringing the needed amount of the Blue Crystal for now, and then the two pledged their allegiance to Earl Muno.
This time it's only with words, but it seems they'll officially be tied to Earl Muno with [Contract] later.

After taking the two Muno to Muno City, we brought the Kobold siblings to the abandoned mine city, and got the approval for their clan to migrate to Tagenkoumi town.

The aforementioned weaselkin magician didn't exist in the map, let alone the abandoned city, so I didn't get to meet him.
His name, [Black Mole] seems to be an alias that's often used, no one knows his real name.

In addition, since Echigoya Firm has received the project to redevelop [Tagenkoumi Town], the essential utilities, dwellings and administration facilities should be complete by the time the Kobolds arrive at Tagenkoumi town.

--Should be, or rather I think I'll just make them with magic secretly.

I tell Echigoya Firm's Manager to make a contract for getting stable supplies of Mithril ingots from Muno Earldom in exchange of the installation of Mithril refining equipment.
The Manager was awfully enthusiastic, perhaps I should have told her to take it easy.

◇

The Kobold siblings show up bringing tributes the day before we depart.
A Blue Steel pike and sword, silverworks, and sapphires, most are jewelries.

"Oh my! How wonderful!"
"It suits you well, Muse."
"Orion-sama."

Miss Muse who got an extra-large sapphire pendant from Orion-kun gleefully hugs him.
Orion-kun who didn't expect his fiancee's action is blushing.

"Viscount Pendragon, this is the promised『Blue Fang』treasured sword and the secret book that details the manufacturing process of Blue Steel."
"Got it."

I received the sword presented by the little sister Kobold and then gave it back to her.

"--Why?"
"The treasured sword should be carried by the one who should have it."

I answered her dissatisfaction while looking at the older brother Kobold.

She seemed to understand, she received the sword while saying, "We will follow our lord's decree."
Like I said, your master is Earl Muno.

The next morning, we departed while being sent off by the people of Muno Earldom.

I thought of stopping by to the Seryuu city, but since I don't want to deal with Earl Seryuu's unreasonable demands, we head toward the eastern group of countries as planned.

The first country is Kiwolk--the kingdom of snow and frost-covered trees.

Our first another world winter sports are waiting!

14-20. Snow Kingdom (1)

*

Satou's here. If we're talking about snow, I'd imagine about the time to be self-indulgent by amusing myself reading manga or playing games inside a Kotatsu. It's hard to leave out skis and snowboards, but being inside a warm room is better after all.

◇

"Snow!"
"Oh no nanodesu! Snow nanodesu!"

After crossing Muno Earldom and the monster dominion, we entered Kiwolk kingdom of the eastern countries beyond the mountain and witnessed a blizzard.
Since this was my first different world's snow, I temporarily canceled the [Canopy] in the airship's viewing deck and let the snow pile up to enjoy it with everyone.

Once there were enough snow to play around with, I called everyone but somehow, Tama and Pochi seem strange.

"Pochi!"
"Tama!"

After the two looked at each other, they ran up to me.

"Snow is bad!"
"Master, if we don't lump together quickly it'll be dangerous nodesu."

The two who tightly cling to my waist turn to everyone and desperately

beckon them.

"Liza, quick~, Nana too~"
"Arisa, and Mia too, quickly stick close together nodesu! Lulu too, Karina too, quick! Nanodesu!"

I thought it was just a play, but Pochi is hiding her tail between her legs, and their voices sound too serious.

"Master, please excuse me."

Moreover, Liza who was called over hugged me from the front with a serious expression.
This is quite rare for Liza.

"Master, I was entrusted with an appeal for support. I'll protect the back."

My back found warm and happiness.
I'm intrigued with the beastkin girls' condition, but let's watch the situation for a little while. Since it's soft.

"Ehehe~ danger is bad isn't it~"
"Nn, prohibited."

Arisa and Mia happily cling to me tightly.

"Umm, excuse me Master."

Even while looking timid, Lulu put her arms around my neck from the side, embracing me.
Without knowing, she's the most glued one on me.

"I-I too, um...."
"I don't really understand, but me too."

"Satou-sama, please excuse me."

Leaving behind the hesitating Lady Karina, Sera and Princess Shistina embraced my left arm.
The two are wearing extra clothes for cold weather so there's not much happiness.

"Zena quick~?"
"Zena too, you'll die if you don't hurry nodesu."
"It's alright no one will die okay?"

Zena kneels down to match Pochi's and Tama's line of sight, and then she asks about the two's reasons.

"Snow is death god~?"
"Snow is pretty, but once you touch it, someone will fall if you don't stick together nodesu."

I don't understand, so I seek the explanation from Liza.

"There was a year where we had terrible blizzards when we were with the previous Master.... At that time there were several humans and snake-headkin who froze to death."

I see... It's a trauma from the previous master huh.

"Tama, Pochi, everyone here is alright okay."

To prove that I got rid of the snow on the viewing deck in an instant, and then filled the flight deck with warm spring atmosphere.
While I was at it, I stopped the blizzard and blew away the cloud outside the airship with the forbidden spell, [Weather Control], letting the sunlight in.

"Lukewarm warm~?"
"Master is really, really amazing nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi smile happily with their whole faces, losing their strength.
Among the girls who are dumbfounded, only Arisa who stares up at me while looking like she's given up.

I clap Arisa's shoulder to tell that's it's her turn.

"Tama! Pochi! After this Arisa-chan will teach you the true way to play with snow!"
"Nyu~?"
"Play with snow nodesu?"
"That's right! The default will be snowball fights and snowman making, but we'll also make a snow hut and eat some warm swe~et Zenzai and Oshiruko!"
"Shiruko~?"
"Are there meat in them nodesu?"
"Well, there's no meat in Oshiruko, maybe we should make Kenchinjiru too? Oden is also nice, but then I'd want sake and beers with it, so make that an exception."

The ways to enjoy a snow country that Arisa cited one after another won Tama and Pochi over.
After confirming that Pochi's tail has begun to swing energetically, Arisa starts to encourage them.

"Are you ready?"
"Aye aye sir~"
"Roger nanodesu!"

Arisa points at the snowfield with a whack.

"Then let's go!"
"Go~"
"Non-stop nanodesu!"

The youth troupe led by Arisa charge at the snowfield where the airship has landed. Together with Nana and Lady Karina.
It seems the snow is new, it's soft so they're buried into it.
Liza seemed to have noticed that, she made use of Magic Armor to create snow-shoes on the sole of her feet and ran with them.

"Let's play around here a bit."

I tell the senior group who are looking at the snowfield and then put down the ramp.

"So this is snow."
"It's cold, it's melting when it touches my finger."

It seems this is Sera's and Princess Shistina's first snow, they're enjoying the snow happily.
Lulu is making snow rabbits together with Zena-san.

I make a lodge that's often in ski resorts beside the airship using magic, and move many frost covered trees in the distant to near the building.
Next, I put a Kotatsu and a potbelly stove magic tools inside the lodge.
Taking the number of people into consideration, I've put a type of Kotatsu table that can accommodate a lot of people.

When I put my legs inside the Kotatsu, it feels like the good old Japanese culture.

◇

"Everyone, thanks for waiting."
"Sweet smell~?"
"Zenzai, nanodesu!"
"Nn, tasty."
"It smells nice isn't it."

Inside the snow hut, I distribute piping hot Zenzai from the heating earthen charcoal brazier to the youth troupe, including Lady Karina.
It's still to early for lunch, so these are just snacks.

"Let's play with the sled after we've eaten this."
"Then Pochi will pull the sled nodesu!"
"Tama too~?"

Arisa who saw the plaything I created earlier made a suggestion to everyone.
Arisa who took a glance at the skis and the snowboards muttered, "To have myself among riajuu even in another world....", please stop lumping enjoyable sports like that.

Looks like Nana is making a snow rabbit statue with mysterious pose together with Zena-san.
There are already snowmen for everyone now. Just how did they make a twintail snowman anyway.

It seems Sera and the princess are not good with cold, they're eating oranges on the Kotatsu inside the lodge.
Liza and Lulu are making Pork Miso Soup for the lunch in the lodge's kitchen.

"Satou-san, what are these boards used for?"

Zena-san who took a break from making the snow statue tilted her head

in puzzlement seeing some skis leaned against the lodge.
Apparently there's no skis in Seryuu City.

It seems there's still some time before the youth troupe finish their Zenzai anyway, I'll teach Zena-san how to ski.

"They're tools called skis to practice marching on the snow. They make high-speed movement on the snow possible, so people practice using them since they're children in snow countries."
"U-Um! Can I use them too?"
"Of course you can."

Zena-san took it seriously, perhaps because I told her that it was military training.

After giving her a simple lecture, the two of us began to slide.
I have Zena-san to use flight magic along with it. This place isn't a maintained skiing area after all, so it's an insurance for if anything happens.

"Master, unfair!"
"Mwu"

When the Arisa and Mia saw us sliding on the slope, the two jumped out of the snow hut while carrying a Zenzai bowl on one hand.

"Pochi, Tama, Mia! Let's chase them!"
"Roger nanodesu."
"Aye aye~"
"Nn, pursuit."

They show up with Pochi pulling Arisa's sled and Tama pulling Mia's sled.
They somehow look like children playing train, but they're high-powered

sleds equipped with Pochi Tama engine that won't lose to a snowmobile.

Two sleds are chasing us from behind while blowing up spray of snow.
The two's kicking power only blow the snow and there's not much driving force, they're slower than they look.

"Zena-san, the one who gets caught up first lose okay."
"Sa-Satou-san, wait for me."

To enjoy skiing that I haven't been for a long time, I'm not using use any skill or magic at all.
While enjoying the powder snow that won't lose to the one in Niseko, together with Zena-san, we carve skiing traces like dancing. <TLN: Niseko is a mountain range famous for its ski resorts in Hokkaido.>
Since Zena-san is skiing while using flight magic, she looks skillful enough you won't guess that she's a beginner.

"Wait there! I won't permit love elopement!"
"Wait~?"
"Wait~, nanodesu!"
"Too fast."

Arisa whose Pochi-powered sled was becoming pure white from the piled up snow shouted out some incomprehensible thing.
Mia who's in the Tama-powered sled looks a bit pale.

Zena-san who's sliding beside me muttered "love elopement" while blushing.
You've been floating away from the snow surface since a while ago you know?

--Huh?

After an illusion where my legs felt like they were pulled below, my body was thrown out in the air.

Apparently, the snow below became a cliff.

"Satou-san!"

Zena-san earnestly stretches herself and catches my arm.
I can just use Sky Drive, but for this occasion, I'll see the results of Zena-san's flight magic practice.

"Uwaa, nanodesu."
"Uhhyaa"

Pochi and Arisa fell off the cliff.

Arisa [Return Teleport]-ed halfway through along with the sled, but Pochi kept falling.
She probably went out of the magic range.

"Air kick nanodesu."

I saw Pochi kicking the air to decelerate and regain her posture.

"Trifling nanodesu."

Although, right after she took a shupin pose on the ground, she got swallowed up by the snow from above and rolled down on the slope. It's really like Pochi.
I open the map to retrieve her back to where everyone is with Unit Arrangement.

--Oh?

It seems there's a local child on the direction Pochi is going.

『Private Pochi, you've got an urgent directive.』

I pass a directive to Pochi who's currently slipping down the slope magnificently through Telephone magic.

14-21. Snow Kingdom (2) SS

*

I'm Pipine of Nadare village in the northwest of Kiwolk Kingdom.
<TLN: Nadare means Avalanche.>

Pon-san, a merchant of Shiga Kingdom said that this kingdom is a country of snow and frost-covered trees, but it's just a cold poor little country.

We've been on bad terms with the neighboring Kogeoku Kingdom, repeatedly having wars with them for several years.
My grandfather, father and brother were taken away as soldiers and never came back.

"Onee-chan, you can't hunt."
"That's right, Pipine. If you go hunting by yourself, you'll get eaten by the Snow Leopard."
"I'm sorry, but I have to do it now that the snowstorm has stopped."

My little sister and grandmother tried to detain me, but I don't have any choice.

In this house with cold air entering through the drafts, there's no dried meat, dried fish or snow vegetable remaining, let alone wild plants and pickled vegetables we picked during the short spring.
We had milk from yaks when we still had them, but during the long two year of winter that still continues, we had disposed all of them.

In this three days, I feel my body has grown weaker from taking nothing but water.
If we don't get some food during this chance, we'll die of starvation sooner or later.

I won't ask for something as luxurious as snow rabbits.
I'm fine even if it's only fog insects, squirrels or weed under the snow, I have to get something anything.

I kicked the frozen front door and stepped forward to the snow.

--White, white, white.

In the usual scenery, I continue to walk toward the Kiwolk Mountain as the landmark that can be seen in the distance.

"It's the Frost Weed."

We can't eat this weed, but Pon-san the merchant will buy it at a high price for [Alkemy] or something.
If we're still alive until Pon-san comes, I'll exchange it for preserved foods.
I smile thinking that I'm lucky to have an unexpected harvest.

I'll have to make use of this luck to find something to eat.

--Snow, snow, snow.

Even though I'm wearing snowshoes, this new soft snow swallow my feet, stealing what little left of my strength.

I saw a small shadow moving beyond the snow.

Perhaps it's a snow rabbit?

It looks like I'm really lucky today.
I take the short bow on my back full of expectation.

Thud, with a sound, snow fell from a tree nearby.

--No! What am I going to do if the snow rabbit escapes!

I put an arrow on the short bow while cursing.
The snow jumps up on the place where I can see the shadow.

--I won't let you escape!

I reflexively ran and what came into my view was a pink-colored triangle inside the snow.
The dancing snow and the fog-like steam flicker around the pink thing.

--Oh no.

It was already too late when I noticed it.

The thing rising from the snow is a snow-colored beast.

A beast that even makes the Snow Leopard into its prey, the ruler of snow field--Rocket Wolf.

It blew the snow behind sounding like a snow slide and then it showed itself before me in the blink of an eye.

--PHYUSWYURUUUUUU.

The warm foul breath blew against my face.
Saliva dripping from its sharp fangs left a deep trace on the snow.

--Ah, I'm going to die here.

I'm worried about leaving my little sister and grandma behind, but if I can leave this suffering-only life, this isn't so bad.

While resigning myself, warm drools blew onto my face.

--I don't want to die, Idontwanttodie, I don't want to die!

"So-someone, save meeeeee!"
"Yes, nanodesu."

--Eh?

14-22. Snow Kingdom (3)

*

Satou's here. There are many cases where a deed that appears eccentric seen from outside has its reason when you go inside. Nevertheless, whether that is valid or not is another question.

◇

"....Is dis heavn'?"

The girl woke up in the bed and muttered.

>[Eastern Country Language] Skill Acquired.

I got a new skill, but since it sounded like a dialect of Shiga Kingdom, I could understand the meaning properly.
I don't intend to activate the skill but I'll use Translation magic to correct the nuance.

"...Um?"

The girl looks at me while looking puzzled.

This girl is the village girl who was saved by Pochi when she was attacked by a large monster in Kiwolk Mountain, Rocket Wolf.
Since her woolen clothes got dirtied by the Rocket Wolf's blood, she's wearing a cotton dress right now.

I wonder if she was stranded in the mountain, she was in Starvation on top of Weakening state, so I made her drink nourishment magic potion and let her sleep in the mountain lodge.

She was enjoying the bed with half-asleep eyes until awhile ago, but it seems she's finally woken up.

"You're mistaken. This is a lodge near your village."
"--Lodge?"

It seems she has realized her misunderstanding, the girl hurriedly gets up from the bed but then she gets an anemia.
I quickly support her and put some cushion behind the girl.

"For now drink this and calm down."
"Delicious... It's like the summer honey water."

The girl is slowly enjoying the citron tea I gave her.

This is a sweet tea made by boiling citron marmalade.
I picked this one since Zenzai would be a bit hard to swallow for her.

"We've brought the milk porridge that Lulu's especially made!"
"Ankake Hamburg Steak too~?"
"Meat is necessary after all nanodesu!"
"Nn, white bread."

The youth troupe brought the meal when the girl was drinking the citron tea.
Even though her stomach should be good now after drinking the nourishment medicine, meat is probably still hard for her.

That worry seemed to be unnecessary, the girl quickly ate up the milk porridge and put the small Ankake hamburg steak intriguingly into her mouth while looking surprised with the softness of the white bread.

The meat used for this hamburg steak comes from Rocket Wolf that tried to kill the girl.

It didn't have gamey smell even though it was carnivorous and tasted like beef, everyone starting from the beastkin girls highly praised it.
I'm thinking of hunting them later, just enough not to make them go extinct.

After filling her stomach, the girl seemed to recall something, said her thanks to me and Pochi, and then she apologized.

"U-um, I'm sorry for eating greedily without saying my thanks. My name is Pipine of Nadare village."
"I'm Satou of Shiga Kingdom."

I probably won't meet her again once we send her to her village, so I didn't tell her my house name and peerage.

"Eh~, you should have said that you're a retired crêpe merchant from Echigo there~"
"Dried sardines~?"
"Pochi likes people who appreciate dried meat more than fish nanodesu."
"Perilla sprinkled."
<TLN: crêpe=chirimen, dried sardines=chirimenjako. Mito Komon reference.>

The youth troupe mistook Arisa's words, derailing it to a strange direction.

"U-um. Is Onii-san a slave trader?"
"No, I'm not. I'm just a traveler."

After I denied it, Pipine looks dejected.
I don't think she's selling herself--feeling intrigued, I try searching her village.

--What is this, 90% of the village are in Starvation state.

Apparently, it'll be dangerous if she can't get food by selling herself.

Moreover, I wonder what this mean, many villages in this country are in similar states.
It makes me remember the old Muno territory.

"Why don't you tell us if you have something troubling you? I might be able to help you, you see?"

The girl hesitated for a bit, but it seemed she was at her wit's end, she talked about the village's distress and appealed for some food even for a little.

"Please! We don't have any money in our village, but there are nine unmarried girls including me. If you sell us as slaves in Shiga Kingdom, then the money for the food will--"
"Calm down. For now, let's go to your village as we have some extra supply of food."

I persuaded the girl and we decided to go to the village with the youth troupe.
We're using a snow boat I've made for the noon play. The main body looks like a canoe made of ice, the jib sail receives the wind to make it move.

"Fast~"
"Pochi has become one with the wind nodesu!"
"Uhhya~, scary."
"Nn, intense."

Our girls seem to like it very much, but the girl's having a face cramp and keeps silent due to the unexpected speed.

A Snow Leopard attacked us in the middle of the way, but it misread the snow boat's speed and landed behind.

It'd be troublesome if it chased us, so Tama brought the Snow Leopard down with an icicle shuriken.

Before long we saw houses between the snow.

Looking from the distant, Nadare village is a small village built on a mountain slope with only around 70 people.
There are big joint barns along the one-story houses buried in the snow, but not even one has any livestock inside.
Mysteriously, there are only a few men, the women consist of the 80% of the villagers.

Snow had begun to fall from the sky when we arrived at the elder's house.

◇

"Satou-sama, I give you my gratitude on behalf of the villagers."

The village elder and the villagers fall prostrate in front of me.
The villagers have escaped danger by taking nourishment magic potions and liquid food, people who can move have gathered in the elder's house.
I've given them enough food and salt so they should be fine until spring.
Mia has also cured the sick people with her magic.

"This may not be much, but they're items that the villagers have assembled. Please take it by all means."

The elder presented various woolen clothing and accessories, wood ornaments and combs, bronze swords, arrowheads etc.
There are some peculiar design carved on the swords and the arrowheads.

"They're peculiar aren't they. Does this have some kind of meaning?"

"This is a groove for varnishing paralyzing poison to hunt snow leopards and bears."

The swords have peculiar design with no guards, and the grips have carving that also act as anti-slip, it looks to me that they'll be popular as a handicraft.

"There are various pattern on these woolen stuff too."
"Ndaaaa. Do you know who made these woven and embroidery ndaaa."

An old woman with wrinkles talks while tracing the embroidery with her finger.
There are patterns handed down for generations in each house, and making a new pattern until you're married seems to be a proof of adulthood.

I'm glad that I've saved the village.
I'd like to preserve these art and culture.

While having sweet potatoes the villagers made, they begin to talk about this country.

"War?"
"Yes, the winter didn't always continue for two years like this, until then, every year, there were always some stirs with the neighboring Kogeoku Kingdom. "

The men of the village decreased every year since they got drafted every time there was a war.
According to the tourism book, wars do happen regularly with the neighboring country.

"It's nice if there's no war, but we can't grow weed to feed the yaks with all this winter."

"Yeah, we can't raise fish on the river and the pond too."
"I sure yearn for spring and summer although they're only two months."

They've done well to survive in such an absurd environment that continues for two years.
The winter most likely continues on because the City Core isn't controlled well.

The reason why the village barns are empty is because they turned the yaks that they could no longer raise into food.

"This village was famous for the yogurt dish even in the Royal Capital y'see."
"I'd like Satou-sama to eat it."
"The yak's milk sake too."

Looking at the map, it seems there are herds of wild yaks in a monster dominion outside of Kiwolk Kingdom.
There's no meaning in the present state, but once the winter somehow has passed on, the yogurt dish and the milk sake might be revived.
I want to assist them as a vice minister of Tourism Ministry.

First, I need to investigate the cause of the prolonged winter--.

◇

"--Snowmen are bringing food?"
"What the hell is that crazy rumor?"

Such rumors were exchanged whisperingly in a bar in the downtown of the sole city of Kiwolk Kingdom which is also its Royal Capital.

This Royal Capital has escaped starvation by eating food made of bodies of a monster called Murder Kelp that live in the lake nearby.
It seems the villages and towns near the Royal Capital and along the main road have received that benefit, but there's not enough to distribute them to every villages.

Moreover, since the Murder Kelp frankly tastes bad, it seems the few wealthy people in the Royal Capital are importing food from foreign countries using a large amount of money.

Murder Kelps seem to be a monster as weak as Demi-Goblins, but there is not insignificant number of people who died after getting dragged into cold water.

"Oy, young man."

When I was listening to rumors and drinking sweet potato liquor with the Murder Kelp jerky as the appetizer, the barkeeper jerked his chin, prompting me to look at the entrance.
A small man who showed up from the entrance sits down beside me.

"Sakura"
"Saku (bloom)"

Hearing the secret word, the small man sighs.
This man is a secret agent of Shiga Kingdom, he's been collecting intelligence in Kiwolk Kingdom.
With the information the prime minister taught me, I got in contact with the barkeeper to call this guy.

"It's not good here, come with me."

Guided by the man, we arrived at a storehouse after advancing through a narrow alley outside the bar's back entrance.

There were some hoodlum-looking men but after a glance from the small man, they returned to their foolish talk without paying any attention to me.
Once we've arrived at the man's hideout under the storehouse, I was finally able to gather information.

"What do you want to know?"
"Do you know the reason why the winter continues on in this country?"
"If we're to believe the talk of the downtown bunch, it's because the『Blizzard Spirit』and the『Grim Ice Ghost』are having a quarrel in the『Ghost Valley』."

I want to see that for a bit.

"Oy, don't take the joke seriously. In reality, it's because of the queen."

The king of this kingdom lost his life in the war two years ago, so the first queen has taken the throne.
The prince who should be the heir is still 9 year old.

Still, [Because of the queen], that means it's not that she can't do the job well, but she's lowered the atmospheric temperature using the City Core power on purpose?

"You know the reason right?"
"At first it looked like it was to prevent the invasion of Kogeoku Kingdom, but--"

I see, tremendous snowfall should have made the march impossible.
It's quite a fantasy-like battle.

"--But now it seems the purpose has changed to money-making."

The small man loathsomely drink the water with melted Murder Kelp.

"We haven't finished investigating the how, but it seems they're able to artificially create Ice Stones by making the winter continues on. They've made big profit by exporting those, that's the main rumor."

Apparently, it seems he can't contact the secret agent in charge of the infiltration.

Ice Stones are a material needed for refrigerator magic tools and Ice Wand for battles, Shiga Kingdom can only produce it from Selbira Labyrinth and a few mountains.
On top of having little yield, there is no stable source of supply that can satisfy the demand, so it's always priced high.

"And, the main export destinations of that are our Shiga Kingdom and the Weasel Empire at the eastern end."

I see, stopping the winter unilaterally would be bad huh... This is bothersome.
I'll ask merchants that deal with Ice Stones and the people in question in the royal palace.

"Thank you for the information."

As a replenishment for his fund, I put a small bag with small jewels in place of cash and also several sake bottles, smoked beef and cheese for the appetizers as a bonus.

"Ooh, unlike the contact so far, you know the stuff. I'm sick of Murder Kelp and sweet potato liquor you see."

The small man who's pleased gives an additional information.

"If yer' going to meddle with the royal palace, then you should be more

careful with the Light Snow Princess and Winter General than the Ice Queen."
<TLN: Winter General aka Fuyu Shogun in Japan, https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/冬将軍 >

What? What are those chuunibyou-like names....

◇

"Master, we've finished delivering the food to the last village."
"Nn, complete."
"Thank you for your work."

The identity of the snowmen bringing food from the rumor in the bar are the snowmen golems I've made and Arisa and Mia carried by them.
With this there should be no one who dies of hunger for the time being.

"Prey~?"
"Lots nanodesu!"
"Master, hunted mainly Grey Wolves and Black Fang Bears, so I report."
"Master, we also have a treated fur of snow leopard."

Next, the vanguards who had come back to the lodge reported.

The snow leopard's fur feels very nice, I'll make one for everyone later.
Of course for Aze-san and the others too.

"Master, I've finished the prototype for『Ration』, would you be willing to sample it?"
"Yeah, I'm going now."

We might meet starved people like this next time, so I asked Lulu to develop preserved food with good nutrition.

Strangely, the main ingredient is Chlorella, the same as Murder Kelp that appear in the Royal Capital.
We made the Giant Kelps that multiplied in the trench near the Underwater City into fine powder and put various dried things and crushed meat of Sea Serpents, making it into a cereal that could be carried.

"Un, it's nice. I won't get tired even if I eat this for a long time."

The degree of completion is such that you wouldn't have thought it only took a few days.

It just needs more flavor variations next.
We might also need to develop a version for allergic people.

After praising Lulu, I go to meet Zena-san, Sera, Lady Karin, and the princess who are leveling up in Selbira Labyrinth.
I've got them to collect ingredients in the Flying Eater (Fish) and Hopping Octopus area while also raising their levels.

I enter the Teleport Gate that goes to the hunting ground in the labyrinth.

"Impertinent, desuwa."
"Ka-Karina-sama! Please don't go too forward."

Lady Karina drops her Pole Mace clad in purple lightning on a giant fish that looks like it could swallow a man whole.

Even though Zena-san warned her, Lady Karina thrust herself into the center of a monster herd.
She's too reckless even though she has Raka's defense and Sera's protective magic.

"Shield Golem, go three steps ahead. Great Sword Golem, stop the

monsters attacking Karina-dono!"

The princess covers Lady Karina using 12 golems like they're her limbs.

These golems move by magic supply from a specially made Command Rod.
The efficiency is a bit bad, but experience points collected by the golems will be shared to the Princess, so she can level up from a safe place.

"Bow Golems, time the attack when Lady Karina retreats--shoot!"

The four rear guard golems shot spear-sized stone arrows, skewering the Hopping Octopus into a triple dango.

"Zena!"
".... ■■■■ Multiple Air Cutter"

At the same time as Lady Karina pointed at the ceiling, Zena-san's intermediate wind magic thoroughly uprooted the Crawler Shells that were approaching on the ceiling.

"Gathering group!"
"Yes. Living Doll-san, go."

Answering the princess, the Brownies who are in charge of the dismantling use the Living Doll to gather the monster bodies from the battlefield.

"Satou-san!"
"Good work."

Sera who found me came to me the foremost.

Besides Lady Karina, they were rarely ever wounded, so it seems her turns

as a healer rarely appeared.
Normally, she acted as a support using a hand-me-down magic gun from Lulu and light magic she learned from the [Blessing Orb].

Leaving the dismantling group and the golems behind, I take the entourage of Tourism Ministry back to the airship.
Lady Karina is not a member of the Tourism Ministry, but I'll have her act as a guard together with Zena, disguised as [Lady K]. Formally, she's diving into Selbira Labyrinth together with Pendragon Team after all.

Now then, shall we go visit our first foreign country as the vice minister of the Tourism Ministry.

14-23. Snow Kingdom (4)

*

Satou's here. Since using poison in suspense drama had gone out of fashion, a friend told me that they could identify the writing era of the original work by looking at the type of the poison used. In the first place, it's rare for a suspense drama to use poison nowadays.

◇

"Then, we'll be going."
"Houi, we're going to the labyrinth, contact us if anything happen okay."

I exchanged words with Arisa in the bridge of the airship that's circling in the sky above the royal castle of Kiwolk Kingdom.
A lot of nobles and merchants have gathered in the makeshift airfield below.

There are a lot of people welcoming us.
Probably because Princess Shistina is with us.

After seeing off Arisa and the others, the Team Pendragon, I meet up with Team Sightseeing who came from the solitary island palace.
The princess is wearing a golden dress, while Sera is wearing a silver dress.

Zena-san and Lady Karina are wearing sunglasses and SP-style clothing with their hair in bun style.
Both of them are equipped with a thin sword as a decoration, they look quite cool.
It's the result of Arisa's and my bad taste.

"Thank you for waiting, your excellency vice minister."

I smiled back at Sera who teased me a bit and lowered the airship.

"A lot of people are there desuwane."
"They must be welcoming us!"

Lady Karina who sounds intrigued, and Zena-san who has an innocent impression.

"Since an airship is quite unusual, maybe we should put some strict guards inside."
"Ara? If there's anything happen with the airship, they'll be picking a fight with Shiga Kingdom right?"
"You shouldn't let your guard down, Tina-sama. Every country has fools who don't understand the self-evident truth after all."

To respond Sera's and the princess's conversation, I summon guard golems from the solitary island palace here.
Three winged gargoyles type on the viewing deck, one exclusive guardian that can use every type of barrier, and eight knight type living dolls to guard the ramp.
Every golem is only around level 30, but these should be enough to prevent simple thievery and smuggling.

◇

I see that the queen is in the center of the people welcoming us when I look around.
Kiwolk queen is a beauty that doesn't look like she's at her forties, her breasts area is particularly intense and she's wearing a black dress.

The right etiquette here is for me to immediately meet her, but since it seems like I'd be looked down if I were to much in a hurry, I should do it after several beats.

This is troublesome--.

"So that's Viscount Pendragon, he's quite young huh...."
"Your excellency, your voice is a bit too loud."

I could hear such whispers from among the kneeling people.
The only one that could hear it was probably me with my [Attentive Ears] skill.

"Good grief, why should I, the eldest son of a duke, kneel before a mere viscount even if he's a noble of a foreign kingdom."
"Viscount Pendragon is a retainer of the viceroy of the large Muno territory, moreover he's been recognized to receive such a precious item as an airship, once he's married to the princess of Shiga Kingdom, there's no doubt that he'll become an influential man in the capital. That influence equals Her Majesty the Queen, or perhaps more."

Hee, so vice ministers and viceroys have that much power huh....

"That youngster is?"
"Indeed. If by any chance, we incurred his wrath and got armies sent to us, our kingdom would eventually perish and our heads would probably be displayed before the castle gate."

Oy oy, what kind of warring state of period talk is that.

"However, our kingdom has the『Forest of Snow』. No matter how many army attacking--"
"Please do not underestimate a major power. They have the『Crimson Ogre』-dono protecting the kingdom's west, and a group of abnormal

people called Shiga Eight Swords."
"However, our kingdom also has the generals and Light Snow Princess."
"Unfortunately, they are no match against them. They are mighty warriors who can fight demons on equal ground."
"Against de-demons...."

I don't know who's this Crimson Ogre, but it seems the 'equaling demons' part is a highly-valued point.
I think even Zena-san and Lady Karina, not just our girls, can easily fight against a lesser demon now.

--Now then, it should be alright now.

Even though the content of the chat was interesting, I took more time than planned. I feel that the queen's smile has begun to cramp.
As I stepped forward while minding to keep refined conduct, I saw the queen slowly took a breath.
Apparently, I had accidentally given some unnecessary pressure to them.

Once I've stepped forward enough, I greet the queen.

"I am the vice minister of Shiga Kingdom's Tourism Ministry, Satou Pendragon."
"I'm Kiwolk Queen, Heitana. I will allow Viscount Pendragon to call me Heitana."
"It is my honor, Your Majesty Heitana."

I lightly kiss the hand of the queen that's wrapped in a white glove.
It feels like the surrounding people who took a glance at that looked relieved and eased their tension.

According to the Tourism Book, it seems to be an etiquette shown to a noble who's above you in the eastern countries, so they're probably relieved to see me deeming the queen to be positioned above.

This seem to be an obsolete custom in Shiga Kingdom.

I introduced my entourages, the princess and Sera to the queen and we changed the location to inside the castle.

◇

"--Amazing."

One of the queen's maids who saw the tribute had her breath taken away.

This place is not the audience hall but the queen's private room.
Two officials, one noble, and one girl with flowing hair near the queen have gathered here.

Glassworks, jade silk and Shiga pongee fabric, work of art and paintings I got a lot in the Royal Capital, I also brought some unusual ingredients for a mountainous country like dried saltwater fish and abalones. There is no arms.

Among the glassworks I've also put engraved seals on them to make them into pseudo magic tools.
They're just items that can prevent slight injuries, and protect against microorganisms and weak germs.

They look like toys compared to the goods my companions have that can even protect against Hydra's deadly poison, but this should be no problem since they're just something to add values to the accessories.

In addition, I asked Sera and Princess Shistina to pick these selection of gifts.

"To bring such gifts for a courtesy call.... as expected of a retainer of the lord of the large Muno territory. Does Viscount Pendragon have a duty as a governor besides being a vice minister?"

The queen who was in good mood due to the tribute asked so.
Even though I'm a governor in name only, she sure knows her information fast.

--I forgot the name of the abandoned mine city, so I checked the name on the map.

"Yes, just the other day, I was appointed to be the governor of Blaiton City by Earl Muno."

The people beside the queen were surprised when they heard the [Governor] part.

"To be a vice minister of the capital, governor, moreover, a warrior who defeated a mighty monster of Selbira Labyrinth, the『Floormaster』at such young age, perchance, Viscount Pendragon is related to Shiga Royalty?"
"No, I am a commoner-born upstart."

A middle-aged noble with handlebar mustache beside the queen--he seems to be the prime minister of this country--asked me, but I promptly denied it.
Even though I said the truth, he said, "you jest", while smiling wryly.
What a mystery.

And then, maids came into the room pushing wagons with tea utensils.

"My, what a wonderful fragrance."
"It's the blue tea from Rumooku. It's a first class good that can even compare to product of Zetsu Earldom of Shiga Kingdom."

The one who reacted to Princess Shistina was the girl with wavy hair.

She's the second princess of Kiwolk, her name is Cruu. She's unmarried despite being a 21 year old royalty, a child-faced beauty with huge breasts.
The breasts in her white dress are probably about the same size as Nana's.

And also, in contrast to her calm demeanor, she's a level 37 magic warrior who possesses Two-handed Hammer, Ice Magic, and Horseback-riding skills.
If you're deceived by her appearance, she might use that chance to beat you.

"Her Highness Light Snow favors Rumooku. Shouldn't you welcome the guest from other country with our own country's tea?"
"General Ganun--"

The prime minister rebuked the muscular read-haired general.

Apparently, Princess Cruu is the Light Snow Princess.
She's the person whom the Shiga Kingdom's secret agent warned me to be careful with.

The other military personnel keeps observing us without saying a word.
He's probably the so-called [Winter General].
He's a black haired man who looks like an unmotivated soldier, a 29 year old man, having a beret looks like it'll suit him.

He's observing the surrounding while sipping the tea.

The tea was good, but the tea-cake was too sweet with gritty sugar.
It seems there are a lot of sweet-tooth in this country, the prime minister and the red-haired general are eating them with relish.

"Do sweet things not to Viscount Pendragon liking?"
"No, it's really delicious."
"However, you look like you don't have an appetite."
"I was admiring the beautiful cake that looks like the new snow of this kingdom."
"Hohoho, Viscount has a way with words."

I made some suitable excuses for the queen.

Using Poker Face skill's help, I put up a business smile and put the too-sweet cake into my mouth.
Ah, it's gritty. I don't dislike sweet things, but this is hard.

"Although the snow is beautiful for us travelers, isn't it hard for the people living here?"
"The continuing snow should make it hard for the people living in the mountain to look after cattle, let alone going on a hunt."

Sera-san got on my the topic I brought up.

"O-our country's people have gotten used to snow, please don't worry."
"I have heard rumor that the winter is unusually long--"

Sera jumped on the prime minister's excuse.

"Fufufu, Sera-dono is kind. I am aware of the continuing winter, thus I have ordered the prime minister to exempt all taxes and forced labors."
"Y-yes, Your Majesty. We will provide food supply if there really are such villages."

The prime minister let out a sigh of relief for the queen's backing.
Fumu, I didn't ask about taxes and forced labors, but I didn't see any food aid at least.

"Your Majesty and prime minister-dono are too soft! There is not enough self-support effort! No matter how long you exempt tax and labor, the war won't ever finish. Once we've assembled our force, even without relying on the winter, we will drive away those annoying Kogeoku Kingdom's savages!"
"--General Ganunu!"

The prime minister chided the red-haired general's verbal slip.
Looks like I can really consider the [Winter] of this country to be man-made.

Black haired Winter General-shi looked bitter, but he turned away when he noticed my line of sight.
Looks like the red-haired general does not like using the [Winter] to prevent the invasion even though his reason seems to be different.

◇

"Satou-sama, please tell me about Shiga Kingdom."
"What kind of dresses are in fashion in the Royal Capital?"
"I was given the chance to see the Jade Silk presented to Her Majesty, it was really wonderful."
"Has Satou-sama seen the thing called sea?"
"I saw in the book that there are seas of sand called deserts, is that true?"

In the dance party we were invited to after the talk with the queen, I was surrounded by the noble daughters.

Every girl is wearing an expensive dress and fine ornaments.
Compared to the suffering populace, the nobles seem to be prosperous.

Sera and the princess volunteered to take care of the girls, so I was finally able to enjoy the party.
Still, it's a gaudy party that's unbelievable for a rural kingdom.
Delicacies that I've never seen in downtowns are lined up on the buffet table.

I tried eating several, the galette with yogurt that seemed to be made of local ingredients, and the greater burdock and carrot wrapped in bird meat with the sweet sauce were tasty.
The others were like inferior version of Shiga Kingdom's dishes, they were not quite there.
It's not a problem with the freshness of the ingredients, it feels like the chefs are just not accustomed to the ingredients.

"What do you think, Viscount-dono. About our country's cuisines."

The eldest son of a duke who was gossiping about me earlier came to talk to me while holding a wine cup in one hand.

"They're very luxurious. The cuisine over here is especially splendid."
"Kiwolk bird wrapped greater burdock is it, you seem to prefer quite a rustic dish."

I praised this kingdom's cuisine since I had a favorable impression, but he treated it as [Rustic dish] instead.
Looks like he dislikes his own country's cuisine.

"Yes, it's simple but truly delicious. Enough to make me wanting to thank the chef later."
"I-is that so...."

If possible I'd like to get the chef to teach me the recipe and the secret to it, that'd be swell.

The young nobleman was taken aback with my reply.
Perhaps he was trying to provoke me?

"Here you are, Viscount-dono!"

The one who called me with a bold voice was the red-haired general, holding a curved sword in one hand.
His face looks a bit red, he reeks of liquor. Looks like he's drunk.

"I heard that Viscount-dono has many valorous acts to be proud of! Please show us your valor by doing a sword dance with me."

The red-haired general throws a sheathed curved sword to me.

As if matching the timing, the people who were dancing around moved aside to clear the stage for the sword dance.
Courteously, the red-haired's and my sword dance is officially announced to the surrounding people.

Looks like it's impossible to decline the sword dance invitation.

I look around the venue to collect information.
The queen is expressionless like a noh mask so I can't read her emotion, the prime minister, the Winter General and some capable looking nobles are looking like it's unpleasant, Light Snow Princess and most of the nobles look like they're looking forward to it.
Judging from the cheering, it seems the red haired general is popular among the military and the wealthy nobles.

Zena-san and Lady Karina who are peeking from behind the venue's pillars are looking here with excited faces.
Sera and the princess's faces look like they're saying, "Get him!"

--This is not a duel but a sword dance you know?

Starting with a strumming sound, heroic tune from the orchestra begins.
I somehow feels that it sounds crude, perhaps because I've gotten used to Mia's music.

"Here I go, Viscount."
"Please go easy on me."

He pulls the curved sword and holds the sheath in the other hand.
The red-haired general seems to be a dual-wielder, so he's using the sheath for the other one instead.

--Zazan.

I block the two swords swinging down on me with the curved sword while matching the tune.
Due to the thin curved blade, it made a peculiar sound when I blocked.

I glide my feet on the carpet, revolving once while still blocking the two swords to the red-haired general's side, and then I strongly fling away both of his swords.

Matching the time when he fixes his posture, I hit my sword against his to make za, zan sounds rhythmically.

"Y-you little!"

Since this was a sword dance, I got out of the swordsmanship's standard and attempted to do some exaggerated movements, but it seems the red-haired general doesn't like it.
I'm imagining the battle dance from the [Returning King] anime, I'll ask Arisa to score it once we get back.

It was popular with the girls and the maids in the venue at least.

In the middle of the sword dance, since I saw the queen getting excited, not only the princess, it was worth the effort.

When the music is over, the red-haired general is gasping for breath.
Looks like the stress is a bit too much for him since it was at the level of simulative blows with the beastkin girls.

Please stop looking at me with those eyes, this was a sword dance you proposed yourself.

"It was quite a wonderful entertainment. Both General Ganunu and Viscount Pendragon are representatives of brave warriors from each country. I shall give you these presents."

The queen praised us both and gave us bracelets with ice stones on it.
They're not magic tools but they look quite expensive.

It seems General Ganunu is a queen devotee, his face looks like he's forgotten about me and is greatly moved with the bracelet he got.

Without a sound, a maid came to me and presented a wine goblet on a tray.

I drank the honey wine and returned the empty goblet to her.
Since it seems there was a paralyzing poison with delayed effect inside the honey wine, I put a mark on the maid.
In addition, although I can cure myself from paralyze state using magic from Magic Column, this kind of abnormal status drug won't work due to my Resistance, so it's not a threat.

"Viscount-sama, could I have a bit of your time?"
"But of course."

I replied to the hooded weaselkin merchant who called out to me with a

smile.

14-24. Snow Kingdom (5)

*

Satou's here. In the past, during the time when the anime about galaxy war was popular, there was a time when drinking black tea mixed with brandy among friends was popular. It quickly ended up with people drinking only the brandy though.

◇

"Are you always wearing that boorish hood?"
"Please pardon me. This is because there are a lot of nobles who find our beast faces unpleasant."

When I was halfway walking outside of the party venue with the weaselkin merchant, I asked about his hood and got that answer.

He was speaking strangely eloquently so I was getting cautious, but looking closer the reason seems to be because of the translation ring he's wearing.
It's probably the same item they gave to the summoned Japanese people in Rumooku Kingdom.

Unlike the warm party venue, this stone corridor with its penetrating cold likely would even make a healthy person catch a cold in half an hour.
There are some movements of suspicious shadow beyond the corridor.
Waiting in a place like this huh, assassins have it hard too.

"Please look at that."

The weaselkin merchant stopped in the middle of the corridor and pointed outside a small glass window.

I see snowy landscapes outside the window.
The Kiwolk Kingdom buried under the snow and a lake covered in ice.

On the middle of the lake an amethyst-like rock--no, tower-like thing has sprouted, emitting faint light.
I can see them thanks to [Distant View] skill but normal people probably can only see a very faint purple light.

I heard a faint sound behind the corridor pillars.
The obvious assailant is probably going to attack soon.

"That purple light is the thing you wanted to show me?"
"Yes, the tower emitting that light is--"

I thrust the merchant away when he was still talking, and swat the poisonous daggers that were thrown at us using a muffler circulated with magic power.

"Impossible."
"He repelled all seven of them!"

The assailants show themselves up from behind the pillars.
Lisp speech were revised in my brain like usual.

The five assailants are holding poisonous daggers.

Under the hood, their figures look like weaselkin, but according to the AR reading, they're ratkin men.
Their affiliation is--.

"Sir Pendragon, are you alright! Soldiers! Do not let even one of the thieves escape!"
"""OU"""

From the opposite side of the corridor, the red-haired general and soldiers showed up with an oddly good timing.
The assailants who are in disadvantage seemingly intend to escape through the hole behind the pillar that they used to invade here.

I've put markers on them so there's no point of them escaping, but catching them would be troublesome, so I neutralize one of the assailants by throwing a pebble on him.

"Send this guy to the dungeon and question him."

The soldiers brought by the red-haired general tie the assailant and are going to take him away.
Oops, it'll be bad as is.

"Sir Pendragon, are you injured anywhere?"
"No, I'm alright."

I gave the red-haired general, who was trying to hide the assailant from my line of sight with a barefaced smile, a positive answer.

"Wait, I have some business with that man."
"Sir Pendragon, please don't get close to the thief."

I stepped forward to stop the soldiers who were going to take the assailant away, but the red-haired general obstructed me.

"This kind of assassins has many unknown ways to attack. As you are our country's guest of honor, we cannot let you get injured."
"I see, that's true isn't it--"

I flick half a copper coin I took from my hand away, uncovering the assailant's hood.

"--I thought he was a weaselkin, but it appears he's a ratkin isn't he."

When I told the red-haired general that while putting a refreshing smile, he muttered, "gununu", and said, "that seems to be the case", with a cramped face while squeezing the words, and then he withdrew.

Now then, about this chain of baffling surprise attacks--.

The ratkin people who attacked us belong the demi-human unit of Kiwolk Kingdom who's specialized in dirty works. Common appraisal technique would show their affiliation to be of a crime guild though.
They're disguising their affiliation like the way the people of the [Wings of Liberty] did.

Next when I tried searching on the map, I found several weaselkin people in critical condition in the dungeon.

This is my conjecture, the red-haired general probably was going to execute the weaselkin people in the dungeon after capturing the assailants and push the crime of my assassination to the weaselkin.
The red-haired general would then drive out the weaselkin away from the kingdom, and either sell all the Ice Stones or perhaps end the [Winter] to restart the war.
He also might have tried to help me who should have been weakened from the paralyze poison and then demand something for the favor.

In addition, the maid who gave me the poisoned liquor is being confined in one part of the noble district in fainted state.

Before meddling with things like a softhearted person would, I'll finish the things I should do now.
I turn toward the merchant who still can't get up.

"Now then, let me hear it. What does that tower--"

◇

"You were the one who incited Ganunu to step on the dragon's tail right?"
"I did not give him any order. Besides, I don't think that Viscount would fall for such a child's play."
"Ara, you sure have a high opinion of him don't you?"
"A commoner who has just come of age, getting peerage of a large kingdom, and even becoming the vice minister of its capital. Only fools would underestimate such a person."

When I sneaked into Winter General's room, I could hear a conversation between the person himself and Light Snow Princess.

"I thought you wanted to end the『Winter』, was I mistaken?"
"It was I who suggested the『Winter』to the queen you know? Even though I knew that it would cut off remote villages, I couldn't come up with other plans."

Winter General told Light Snow Princess like he was sneering at himself.

"Our army is weak huh."

Light Snow Princess muttered so and stood up.

"If the『Winter』won't stop then I can't fight in this country anymore. Rather than rotting inside this ice cage, maybe I should entice Viscount-sama and get him to take me to countries with battlefields?"
"Are the Snow Leopards and the Rocket Wolf not to your liking?"
"I've grown tired of them. I want to fight demons for the sake of world peace. Even though it's impossible for me to stand beside the hero, I want

to be a warrior that can rival the Shiga Eight Swords."

I thought Light Snow Princess was someone who seeks enjoyment more, but she unexpectedly has a clear target.
After the silent Winter General sent a restraining glance, Light Snow Princess shrugged and left the room.
Winter General gulps down the kelp tea mixed with sweet potato liquor with a gloomy face.

"....The『Winter』will defend us from the enemies only for several years more. Knowing the Kogeoku King, he will absolutely find a way to make it possible for his army to move on the snow. Gathering Ice Stones and preparing weapons until that happens is...."
"Is it impossible?"
"....Your Majesty."

The queen in black dress came in from a different door than the one Light Snow Princess used to go out.
I expected her to wear some sexy see-through clothes, but she's wearing a business-like dress with subdued chest.

"We can prepare a fixed number of them in five years if we put the portion wasted to the nobles to use, but as it stands now--"
"That's impossible. There are a lot of nobles who reject the『Winter』even now. If we stop coaxing them with money and goods, there will be intense dispute to select the next king, there won't even be any development."

The queen pours some sweet potato liquor to the tea cup and sips it elegantly.

"It'd have been simple if the king of Kogeoku would stop the invasion--."
"That's impossible isn't it. The cold wind flowing from this country is killing the meadows of that country. With how the『Winter』is accelerating now, Kogeoku King won't yield."

--Hm?

Even if this country keeps temperature above spring all year, the dispute with the neighboring country won't stop?

"Is there really no way?"

Winter General remains silent to the queen's question.
Is his pride preventing him from saying no, or perhaps--.

"There is. However, Sir Pendragon's help is indispensable in this plan."
"Say it. If it's anything that I can do, I will even offer my body."
"We ask him and his retainers to kill the demon sealed in the lake."

--The demon sealed in the lake.

In fact, the merchant told me about that earlier.

In order to keep the seal of this demon, the winter of this country has been prolonged.
The miasma leaking from the demon is changing the lake kelps into monsters, the ice essences gathered on the tower where it's sealed produce Ice Stones.

It seems the reason why the merchant told me that was for the sake of [securing profit].
He has collected enough supply of Ice Stones, so he wants a third party to end it out of fear of a price collapse if the production continues.
It's selfish, but it's really like a weaselkin merchant.

"If the lake demon is killed, then it will not be impossible for this country to keep an everlasting spring."
"Fumu, it's a bit difficult, but simply keeping a warmth temperature

enough to prevent cold air blowing to the neighboring country should be possible. There is no guarantee that it will stop Kogeoku Kingdom's attack, but there is a merit in trying."

Looks like the story is advancing while I was deep in thought.

"Very well, I will seduce the viscount with my charm. Wait for the good news!"

The queen went out of the room after leaving a statement that sounded like a preview for the next episode.
I think she'll come across Light Snow Princess who's waiting in the bed of my room, but leaving them be should be fine.

I knock on the door and enter the room without waiting for the general's response.

"Good evening Your Excellency General."
"Welcome, Viscount-dono. Would you be willing to defeat it, the lake demon?"

I thought there would be some long explanation, but it seems Winter General noticed me eavesdropping.

"If you can promise me a promptly end of the『Winter』and half of the Ice Stones the country has in stock that is."
"Understood. I promise to get the queen's approval with my life on the line."

He quickly accepted it even though my condition was quite unreasonable.

The demon sealed in the lake is high leveled for a mid demon at level 50. Its skill are [Ashification], [Summon Servants] and more. This [Ashification] seems to be the advanced version of [Petrification].

When I was going to toast the liquor cup offered by Winter General with him, the door opened violently.

"General! We got a report of Kogeoku army breaking through the fort!"
"W-what! I'm going! Viscount-dono, please excuse me."

Winter General left the room in a hurry after hearing the official.

This country sure is full of drama isn't it.

--Do your best, Winter General.

14-25. Snow Kingdom (6)

*

Satou's here. There was a time when I kept a pet cat in my lodging house during my college days. Many times, I woke up with corpses of G lined up before my eyes like they were offering and my cat looking triumphant, perhaps it was because the dwelling was run-down. That was troublesome.
<TLN: G=gokiburi=cockroachs>

◇

As the Winter General and the official went to the general staff room together, I opened the map and checked the situation while sipping the sweet potato liquor.
It seems the Kogeoku Kingdom army has invaded the mountain region to the south-east.
It's quite to the south of the regular highway.

--Centaurs kin?

Looks like Kogeoku Kingdom is not a human kingdom.

Real life centaurs huh... Maybe we should go sightsee them?

While thinking that and looking at the map's information, the movement of a small unit that's seemingly attacking a nearby village looks strange. It's as if they're running away from something, heading toward the main troop.

Wonder if they encountered Rock Wolves?

Yet, there's no dead person in Kogeoku Kingdom army.
Only people in fainted and frostbite states.

I invoke [Clairvoyance] and [Clairhearing] magic to confirm the actual site.

『I-it's a demon! A snow demon is attacking.』
『Run away! You'll get stepped on!』

I saw centaurs wearing warm-looking fur armor desperately scampering in the snow.
Their language seems to be of the East Nation language.

『Uwaaaaaaa』
『Tommy!』
『That guy's finished. Quick run!』

--Oh?

The white object walking with thud thud sounds looks familiar.
It's the snowman golem we used to transport food.

They were a disposable type that didn't use Magic Core so I had set them to protect the village after they had finished transporting to the last village.
They should be only in three places, those centaurs sure are unlucky to draw the loser ticket by chance.

『I am the third prince of Kogeoku Kingdom, Retaromi! Demon! Become the rust of my treasured lance!』

--Oh, amazing.

He performed an accelerated Lance Charge as if he was flying in the sky,

though it was probably due to the power of the wind stone on the tip of the lance.

With a dull sound, the snow golem's stomach was pierced through.

"Did you see that! The strongest of Kogeoku--"

During the middle of the prince's victory shout, the snow golem dropped its fist from above, burying Prince Retaromi deep into the snow.
The hole in the golem's stomach was restored to the original state like reversing a film, and it restarted to attack the other centaurs energetically.

It looks comical looking at them from the image in my mind, but the escaping centaurs are serious.
I've set it to be non-lethal for everything but monsters, so there's no one dying for now.

『Save the prince! Bring the flame beasts!』

A slightly arrogant-looking commander swung a short whip with tuft attached, and then eight monsters that looked like anteaters that spew fire from their mouth came from the troop's vanguard position.

Apparently they're tamed monsters.
They're probably using those monsters to move the army in the snow.

『BURN IT DOOOOWN!』

The snow is lit red, and the snow golem is covered in flame, melting.

However, the snow golem can't be melted that easily.

--MVA.

From the snow golem's charcoal briquette mouth that opened, it emits blizzard breath mixed with icicles after roaring once.

--KUGYWEEEEEE.
--KYSHUUUUUUW.
--MVA.

The flame and the blizzard jumbled together, the image is covered in white mist.

"Hoooooot"
"Co-cold. I'm numbiiiiing."

Apparently, the hot steam and the cold blizzard did a number to the surrounding centaurs.
It'll be nice if they come to dislike war a bit after this.

Some unknown top people of Kiwolk Kingdom will probably goes through a sleepless night without knowing that the military forces of Kogeoku Kingdom were chased away by a golem.

Before going to sleep, I stealthily saved the weaselkin people in the dungeon and the paralyzing poison maid who was on the verge of being frozen to death and left them in some appropriate stable.
They won't die from cold there, and they'll probably run away themselves.
In addition, I confirmed that the weaselkin people in the dungeon were falsely accused from the conversation of the guard and the torture officer.

After coming back to my room, I slept while feeling slightly troubled with the perfume fragrance and the warm temperature of human body in the bed.

◇

"Looks like you can walk on top of the frozen lake surface."
"Yes, but since the snow flake bears can't walk on it, everyone has to get down."

The next morning after the army of Kogeoku Kingdom scurried back to their home land.
Together with Light Snow Princess, I rode polar bear-like passenger animals to the Amethyst Tower on the middle of the lake.
There are several house-sized domes made of ice near the tower, they're probably the magic facilities the weaselkin engineers are using to produce Ice Stones.

This place looks like a good tourist attraction if only the demon weren't sealed in the Amethyst Tower.
Direct subordinates of Light Snow Princess, the White Lily Squad that's encompassed of 15 female knights have followed us here.
Their average level is 8, so they're probably just a decoration squad.

"I heard that a neighboring country has attacked, is it alright for you to guide me?"
"Yes, I don't mind. Kogeoku army seemed to have been defeated by an unknown demon and retreated back. Right now general Ganunu should be going to investigate the demon."

Light Snow Princess answered me with a light tone.
The snow golem should have crumbled after losing all its magic power yesterday, the red-haired general's search will go in vain.

Apparently, the information about the the withdrawal of Kogeoku army arrived this morning through the messenger tower whom Winter General had built.

There's only one facility on the direction of Kogeuku Kingdom that exists, but the high-speed information is quite a thing.

--MUWOOOOWN.

The yell of the monsters below the ice was transmitted here.

The squirming Murder Kelps under the ice look gross.
Even though I know they can't get through the thick ice, it's still physiologically revolting.

"That's, right."

Light Snow Princess points at a suspicious altar where a seal-type magic circle is engraved.
There are six of this altar placed around the Amethyst Tower.

Today is just a preliminary inspection. The sealed demon's extermination will be in two weeks.
We're going to bring the mithril explorers team [Pendragon] from the Labyrinth City with the airship.

"By the way, Your Highness."
"What is it?"
"I wonder what are the imposing Ice Wands that the guards are carrying and the cannon on the sled behind us for?"
"Ufufu--"

Light Snow Princess dodged my question by laughing.

"--What do you think they're for? If you guessed right, I'll give you the right to do anything you want with me."

Light Snow Princess who walked up to the altar looked at me with a

feminine smile.
The huge War Hammer she's shouldering looks extremely ill-matched with her.

Don't tell me, she won't destroy the seal right here and now will she?

"<<BREAK>> Castle Destroyer War Hammer!"

After the princess recited the scripture while smiling, the war hammer--Castle Destroyer War Hammer glowed red.
Boom, tearing the cold air, the princess's hammer smashes the sealing magic circle.

I could have stopped the princess's rampage if I had used Ground Shrink and chantless [Magic Hand], but as expected, using those would have exposed me.
If I could use those, it'd show that I'd have no problem fighting against a mid demon in a close combat.

Using [Telephone] magic, I ordered my companions in the airship to do an emergency takeoff and to deploy the gargoyle unit here.
They should arrive in several minutes at this distance.

--Crackle.

"Now then, Satou-sama. Let us fight together."

Light Snow Princess stretches one hand toward me with a nice smile.
How do I say this, she's a battle junkie at the same level of the black dragon.

--Crackle crackle crackle.

The Amethyst Tower is cracking.

The weaselkin engineers who were working in the ice dome nearby ran away while fumbling on the ice lake surface.

The young ladies of White Lily Squad seem to have taken some distance away and finished preparing the Ice Wands.
It seems setting the cannon on the sled is met with some difficulty, the female engineers are operating in panic. Do your best, I cheered for them in my mind.

The Amethyst Tower breaks while leaking white mist.
The thing that appears is a mid demon with the lower half of an octopus and upper half of a rotted tree. There's a bird nest-like structure on the part that should be its head.
It seems the tentacle lower half is under the ice until the middle part.

--TWAKWUUUUUUUOW.
<TLN: Written in romaji on the raw. FYI, 'tako' means octopus.>

The mid demon roared, the ice below cracked and then tentacles appeared from the cracked ice.
Somehow, it feels like when your feet get tangled on roots of sweet potatoes.
I thought it was freed at a glance, but only the outer tentacles had appeared from the ice.

I said that the tentacles looks like an octopus's, but there are branches grown on the middle of the tentacles, the way they're wriggling look gross.
Before the demon could got its freedom, Light Snow Princess who was the closest jumped forward.

"Dwoseeeeeeeeeeeeeeei!"

With an unladylike yell, she struck the mid-demon's body with the Castle Destroyer War Hammer.

Due to the Body Reinforcement and Strength Increase skills, Light Snow Princess's swinging speed was quite a thing.

--DWAGWWWUUUUOWN.

The demon's roar seemed to be a spell, an ashen barrier appeared to block the Light Snow Princess's hammer.
The scattered ashen powder seem to bring bad status, the princess's armor that's bathed in the powder begins to deteriorate.

Taking the Fairy Sword from behind the mantle, I cut the tentacle that tried to sweep down the princess.
The tentacle tried to attack me by scattering ashen blood by wriggling about, but it stopped moving when I trampled it with my foot.

"Satou-sama, my thanks desuwa."

The demon's bird nest-like head has begun to produce ashen mist.

"Ice Wand unit! Fire at the head!"
"""YES!"""

By the vice-captain's order, the young ladies of the White Lily Squad use the Ice Wands.
The shower of white hail freezes the ashen mist above the demon, blowing it away.

It seemed the demon didn't like it, it took out the tentacles below the ice without caring the tentacles that got torn-off.

--DWAGWWWUUUUOWN.

The demon seemed like it was going to invoke a ranged magic, so I kicked the tentacle that was going to attack the princess toward the main body,

stopping its chant.

Meanwhile, the demon's thin tentacles stretched toward the White Lily Squad, binding them.
Screams, stretched limbs, broken chest armor, they were like in eroge, but unlike a game, the girls were not being disgraced, but slaughtered here.
The demon tries to attack with its tentacles, aiming at the hearts under their bare skin.

"I won't let you!"

To save her subordinates, Light Snow Princess aims her war hammer at the root of the demon's tentacles, she has too many gaps since she's wielding a heavy weapon.
The tentacle coming from behind her caught her leg, raising her body up in the air.
While screaming, the princess is raised upside down.

I don't like splatters, so I stop the sharp demon's tentacle with [Magic Arm].
The young ladies of White Lily Squad who saw the sharp tentacles before their eyes had cold sweat while looking pale.
I'm sorry for the young ladies, but help is coming soon, so please bear with it.

"....■■■ Air Slasher!"

Clear voice echoed in the sky, and then invisible blades cut the tentacles.

The aftermath of the blades that cut the tentacles also tore the ice field, covering the surrounding area in white ice and snow mist.
Being invisible is a good thing, I take out some pebbles from Storage and throws them at the root of the demon's tentacles.
The wind magic earlier only cut the surface of the tentacles, it didn't sever

them.

Flying in the sky with a shining emerald staff on her hand is Zena-san.

"I-I can't stooooooop"

I catch Zena-san who was going to crash to the ice with [Magic Arm].

I thought she was strangely fast, turned out she used the catapult in the airship to gain the velocity.
Imitating Pochi and Tama is dangerous, please be more discreet okay.

"T-thank you Satou-san."
"Are you hurt anywhere?"
"No, I'm alright."

Behind the heartwarming exchange, the tumbling demon struggled to get up and slid along the ice.
The gargoyles that came flying seemed to have rescued the young ladies of the White Lily Squad.

Light Snow Princess is squirming to get out of the tentacle that's coiling the lower part of her body.
The tentacle is strangely active even though it's been separated from the main body.

"Ah, Her Highness Princess is!"
"Can I ask you to help her?"
"Yes! I'm going."

Zena-san who saw Light Snow Princess pulled her stiletto and went to rescue her.
I'll support Zena-san with [Magic Arm].

"FIREEEEE!"

While sinking into the breaking ice field, the cannon on top of the sled fired off blizzard mixed with white icicles.
However, due to the unstable ground, the attack vainly disappeared beyond the horizon without hitting the target.

Looks like the shooter young ladies have managed to escape the sinking sled.
When I look closer, the magic facilities where the weaselkin were using to produce Ice Stones are sinking into the lake together with the broken domes.
I stealthily extend [Magic Hand] to one of them and collect it.
I'll put it back into the lake once I've finished making the copy.

"Satou-san I've successfully rescued the princess."
"T-thank you for your cooperation desuwa."

Light Snow Princess who's borrowing Zena-san's shoulder has wounds all over her body.
Her white steel armor is crumbling, but compared to her subordinates whose skins even got exposed, she's still better.

I looked up when I heard an engine sound and saw the airship approaching the lake.

I could see the princess, Sera and Hikaru on the bow canopy.
Looks like Hikaru has come to help since I talked to her about the demon when I went to the solitary island palace.

The catapult gate on the approaching airship is opening.

--It can't be.

"Karina kiiiiiiiiick!"

Lady Karina who mimicked Zena-san flew from the airship's catapult.
Doing that despite not having any way to fly, she's too reckless.

Lady Karina who's wrapped in Raka's white light protection runs into the demon body like a bullet.
The demon's ashen barrier and Raka's protection is clashing, scattering sparks around.

Kaboom, with heavy sounds, the ashen barrier got broken through.

--DWAGWWWUUUUOWN.

The demon's roar that's both a chant and a scream echoes.
I saw the ashen blood splash eroding Lady Karina's trousers' cuff.

"Raka! Expand the protection!"
『Umu, this is bad.』

With my call, Lady Karina's [Intelligent Item], Raka, expands the light protection.
Unlike the young ladies of White Lily Squad, it ended with just Lady Karina's ankle getting exposed.

Thanks to Lady Karina's reckless courage, the demon's health is on the verge of exhaustion.
I kept the fact that the demon's HP had been cut down by 90% from the pebble attack before her assault a secret.

The demon screamed like it was its death agony, the tentacles that remained on the ice field writhed about.
It seemed Lady Karina's feet were damaged badly and she couldn't move, so I made her move using [Magic Hand], evacuating her here.

『Shistina-sama, the bombardment.』
『Yes! Understood.』

The two magic cannons of the airship burns down the demon with red heat rays.

These magic cannons are the same model used in Seryuu city to fight wyverns and installed in large airships.
It's not usable with a normal airship since the ship's magic power won't be not enough, but it's a different story with my airship since mine has a magic furnace that makes use of a Philosopher's Stone.
The fact that the small fire bullet from my Magic Column has higher attack power than the cannon is a secret.

Thus, the mid demon that was sealed in Kiwolk Kingdom was destroyed and became black dust.

14-26. Snow Kingdom (7)

*

Satou's here. Cleaning up afterwards is unexpectedly hard isn't it. When I think back upon it, the reason why I stopped cooking my own food when I was living alone was because cleaning up afterward was troublesome.

◇

"Sir Satou Pendragon, extolling your achievement, we reward you with the Medal of Kiwolk Blue Ice Lake."
"I respectfully accept."

I was also offered the peerage of Kiwolk Kingdom's marquis as a reward. According to Princess Shistina, there are many cases of Shiga Kingdom nobles receiving peerage of other countries, but since there's no merit in getting the peerage, I declined the offer.

As an extra prize, I was also offered Light Snow Princess and her sisters' hand in marriage, but I also politely declined that.
Light Snow Princess kept elegantly complaining how she wanted to go together with us as a guest, but I persuaded her to stay here since this country would need her power now that the winter is over.
In addition she was reproached by the queen and Princess Shistina for forcibly attacking the demon arbitrary. I didn't back her up since it was her own fault.
For this incident, Sera and Princess Shistina got the permission to read the royal castle's library, so I'm thinking of reading many things there.

I legitimately got the Ice Stones promised by Winter General.
There were a lot more than I thought, but I brought it to the solitary island palace through the airship's passage so there's no problem.

It was a bit inconsistent with the airship's hangar capacity, but I explained that I had a high-performing [Magic Bag] to people who were doubtful.

"Sir Pendragon, thank you very much for your assistance."
"I practically did nothing, it was all thanks to my companions."
"My fiancee who was in Light Snow Princess's White Lily Squad wouldn't have gone unscathed if it wasn't for you."

After I was done talking with Winter General, an intellectual beauty with short blond hair who was standing beside him bowed once and said her thanks with a dignified voice.
If I'm not mistaken she was one of the girls who were operating the cannon on the back.

A few days later, I left the party in the royal castle to Sera and Satou doll to take care of, while I, the princess and Hikaru who acted as the guard replacing Lady K went to the royal castle's library to hunt information.

Further, I let Lady K aka Lady Karina to watch footages of traffic accident-like videos to make her realize the rashness of the catapult takeoff she did.
She was trembling together with Pochi and Tama beside her, so she's probably going to take care of herself better from now on.
Right now, she's currently together with Pochi and Tama, experimenting with practical uses of catapult takeoff equipment.

Now then, back to the topic about the library.
There weren't many books, but the documents about the abandoned festivals and local cultures were quite interesting.

"There's a lot of unusual method of ice and fire magic, but most of them aren't that different from the ones in Shiga Kingdom's documents."
"Satou-sama, Ancestor King-sama, please look at these documents

relating about magic tools."
"Is this weaselkin language?"
"There is a dictionary for eastern nation language here."

The things the princess found were documents about the general concept of the magic equipment I got during the battle with the demon recently and its operation manual. I'll be copying the content.

Other than that, there wasn't any big discovery and we finished the investigation.
There wasn't any suspicious ancient document or something that I expected.

Further, Light Snow Princess tried to stow away before we departed, but the guard golems caught her, rolled her up in bamboo mat and delivered her to the royal castle's soldiers.
Winter General implied that she was going to forcefully do it before we went, so it was easy to uncover her plan to stow away among the Ice Stone containers.

With a bit of such problems, we, who had settled all the cases, departed for the journey while being sent off by the people of the Royal Capital.

"Satou-sama! I won't give uuuuuuuup!"

Since the stubborn princess shout out loud from the royal castle's spire, I waved back to her with a smile.
What an interesting person. I have no intention of going on the journey with her, but I'll keep her company if we come here again.

◇

Thus, we officially left but--.

We disguised ourselves and then went back to the Royal Capital to treat ourselves with some sightseeing.

"It sure is lively isn't it~"
"That's because Queen-sama announced that the『Winter』is ending. Here, take these young ladies."
"Thank you~?"
"Wa~i, nanodesu."
"Nn, thanks."

A stall shopkeeper who's in high tension gave green manjuu wrapped in kelp to the girls.

"I like something a bit harder, but this reminds of the weed dango in Seryuu city."
"Suited for vegetarians, so I evaluate."
"It tastes unusual isn't it."

Liza ate the manjuu and squinted, Nana and Lady Karina carried the manjuu into their mouth with complicated expressions.
Sera and the princess knew that the cuisine in this country tasted bad so they declined the manjuu with a smile and laugh.

"Ugee, yuck. ...Satou."
"Okay okay, I'll eat the leftover, so don't make that face."
"Wa~i, thank you~"

I got the manjuu from Hikaru who had given up from just one bite.

"Mwu."
"I-I want to make the guilty verdict."

For some reason, Mia and Arisa are looking at me like they want to say something.

I lightly pat their heads and advance the street.
While chewing the peculiar tasting manjuu in my hand that by no means were tasty, and watching the people who were excited with the [Arrival of Spring], I fully enjoyed the famous places and specialty products of Kiwolk Kingdom.

As I thought, sightseeing is better when the place is merry isn't it.

◆Extra◆

"Kuro-dono, are you telling that you will build a bulwark on the national border to Kogeoku?"
"That's right."

As Kuro of Echigoya Firm, I visited Kiwolk Kingdom and suggested such a plan to the queen.
As the compensation, I demand the permission to build a branch office in the Royal Capital and amnesty for the people of Kiwolk's remote villages who had left the country and became nomadic tribes.

"People leaving the country is an undesirable state brought about by my lack of virtue. I do not mind giving them amnesty, but what does Kuro-dono seek for desiring such a thing?"
"It is the will of my master, Hero Nanashi-sama."

The queen's question is reasonable, but the goal of this interference is to secure a gain.

As for the gain, since I noticed some people from Kiwolk Kingdom's

remote villages had left the country and become wandering people, I'm going to send ones among those people who wish to emigrate to Muno Earldom to the city that will be governed by Satou and the surrounding villages with Unit Arrangement stealthily.
It'd be an international problem if I did it while they were still nomadic tribes, so I've come to ask the amnesty ahead of time.

With this, the wool product and yogurt dish should spread in Muno Earldom.
I've brought enough wild yaks already to produce the materials. Taming them seems like it'll require a considerable effort, but I'll let the emigrated people to work hard on it.

For the meddling, I'm going to make a workshop that produces rations made from Murder Kelp in order to give works to the widows and the orphans.
It's in conflict with their occupation so far, but they should be stopping being reliant with the kelp once the spring comes so it should be good to kill the time until that happens.
The taste is lacking after all, but a portion of the production will be bought by the Kingdom as emergency food reserves. I'll be expecting the new branch manager to expand the market.

I hope that warm spring will come to Kiwolk Kingdom--.

◆Pipine's Point of View: Survivors of Nadare Village◆

"Uwaa! The snow stopped!"
"Look, look onee-chan! Water drop is dripping from the icicle!"
"It's spring! Spring is coming!"
"Yay!"

At the scene that conveyed the arrival of spring after 2 years, my little sister and I rally together loudly.
My little sister took the snow shovel and jumped into the house.

I am Pipine of Nadare village to the northwest of Kiwolk Kingdom.
The village that was on the verge of destruction 10 days has become lively beyond recognition.

This and that are all thanks to Satou-san for sharing us food and salt.

"Onee-chan, the person who collapsed on the road woke up!"

My little sister called, I rushed into the house.
The beauty-san who got up from the fur bed looks at us with sleepy eyes.

She was going to say something, but I stop her with my hand.
Her throat would get hurt if she tried to talk since she was sleeping for a long time.

"I'll boil hot water quickly, please wait okay."

The beauty-san with light blue hair that looks like the sky across the icicles lightly nods.

"So you have saved me.... My gratitude."

After drinking the hot water, she took a light breath and said her thanks.
While feeling embarrassed, I warm up the yesterday evening soup and grill some saltwater fish and dried fish I got from Satou-san.

"This is good. I heard that the people of this country suffered from famine...."

Beauty-san tilted her head, shaking her light blue hair.

What an unusual color. The peddler Pon-san told me that there's a king with pink hair in the kingdom to the south.
Maybe this person is a royalty.

"Un, that's right. There might have been no one who survived in this village if Satou-san didn't give us food."
"Is that so.... So it was the truth."

Beauty-san's complexion clouded over with a complicated expression.
The tasty soup will be spoiled if you make that face.

"--Wait, 『Sato』 you said?"
"No that's wrong. It's Satou-san you see?"
"I-I see, it appears I misheard."

It seems she mistook Satou-san's name with her acquaintance.

I received the emptied soup bowl and gave Beauty-san well grilled dried fish.

"Then, to return the favor, I will bring the divine punishment as the proxy to the people who have made this terrible 『Winter』 continue, even to the statesmen."

Beauty-san said some difficult things while biting the dried fish in relish.
I don't really understand, but she misunderstood one thing.

"The winter is over you know?"
"--What?"

I open the window and show here the dripping icicles.
Slightly warm wind flows from the window.

"Spring is coming soon!"

When I told her that with a smile, Beauty-san stood up while muttering, "I see, there was no need for the divine punishment."
It seems she can already move well even though she collapsed on the road and slept for days.

"Girl. Bring one firewood and an empty pot."

I gave her the things she asked, then she said, "This is my thanks", and changed the firewood into salt.

"Wooooow."
"Onee-chan, it's amazing. She turned a firewood to salt!"

It seems this person is a magician.
My little sister and I joined our hands seeing the miracle before our eyes and screamed in surprise.

We still have salt from Satou-san, but we can never have enough salt, so I received it obediently.
Salt is more useful than money in this Nadare village.

"Then, I'll be going, girl."
"You're going already?"
"Umu, I cannot be in tranquil in order to increase believers of God Zaikuon."

I gave spare snow-shoes and a basket filled with food for several days to the beauty-san who wore a white robe and a white mantle.

"Are you sure?"
"Un, we got a lot salt from you."
"Then I will gratefully accept them. May your life be blessed with fortune-

_"

Beauty-san who happily took them left after saying some priest-sama like words.

◆

"Oy, Pipine! Is the collapsed person still sleeping."
"Elder-san! Un, she left energetically after drinking the soup."

--Rather than that!

"Elder-san, what are those yaks?"
"Ou, these are borrowed things from Echigoya Firm of Shiga Kingdom. They lend the village around 100 yaks. I'm distributing these two to your place. Raise them carefully since they're borrowed okay."
"Un! Leave it to me!"

I take the yaks' leash from elder-san and lightly scratch the chin of the yak that's leaking white breaths.
My smile naturally leaks when I see the yak snorting happily.

My father and brother who went to the war didn't come back, but the yaks did.
From now on I will raise the yaks, squeeze the milk, shear the wool and live.
And then I will teach my children the way to weave the wool--.

Before that I have to find a husband.

Satou-san's kind smile flashes in my mind.

"Onee-chan, your face is red you know? Did you get a cold?"
"It's nothing! Nothing I said!"

I shake off my little sister's pressing and roll my sleeves to take down the snow piled on the roof.
Now, today is going to be a busy day too!

14-27. Journey Across the Eastern Countries

*

Satou's here. I feel that time passes faster when you're immersing yourself in your hobby. Even in my work, I can quickly come up and create difficult routines, while squashing bugs and working out the changes in specification are long and hard.

◇

It has already been one and a half month since we departed the snow country--Kiwolk Kingdom.

We visited various countries and small tribe villages in relaxed pace while working hard in leveling up and practices during the airship cruise.
Of course there were recreations led by Arisa inserted appropriately between them.

Today I've come to Boruenan Forest alone to play and show my new work to Aze-san.

"Amazing, Satou! You've finally succeeded!"
"Yes, the magic power consumption is still too large though, so there's still some time until it's completed."

I look up at the airship that appeared in the sky above the tree house in Boruenan Forest.

Even though it's inferior compared to the elf's Light Ships and Hero Hayato's Jules Verne, I'm finally able to make my own airship fitted with

the dimensional-cruise function to fly.
It's thanks to the technology provided by the elf's Beriunan Clan and Burainan Clan.

"It's really amazing. Light Ships are produced and maintained by the world trees, so there are only a few who understand the dimensional-cruise function, in fact, only high elves-sama of Beriunan Clan and Burainan Clan can make them."

Lua-san who's looking at me with respectful eyes from the side praised.
Right after I made a good atmosphere with Aze-san, the craftsman elves came one after another after seeing the new type of airship.

"Yo, Satou. Did you finally make a Light Ship too?"
"I can't believe we are overtaken by a human who had just learned the basic of airships."
"Right, I made an automatic ice maker from the Elemental Stones I got from you last time, take it."
"With that many Elemental Stones, we can make everything."

The Elemental Stones mentioned in the latter half are not about the Ice Stones I got from Kiwolk Kingdom.

After leaving that country, we saved the army of the third prince of Kogeoku Kingdom who were dying from cold in a monster domain, and we got a lot of Wind Stones as thanks.

Just like the the neighboring Kiwolk Kingdom that produced Ice Stones, the country of meadows, Kogeoku is also producing Wind Stones artificially.
Of course, the ones providing the technology are the weaselkins just like in Kiwolk Kingdom.
I'm intrigued as to why they're gathering Elemental Stones, but I have a feeling that it's all about profit.

Due to some twists and turns and Pochi's efforts, I was able to get the wreckage of Kogeku Kingdom's Wind Stone magic facility, and got to comprehend the general method to create Elemental Stones by comparing it to the Ice Stone magic facility I got in Kiwolk Kingdom.

Put simply, by turning spirits into a simple element and giving them a lot of Magic Essence, the Magic Essence will crystalize into Elemental Stones.
This [Turning spirits into a simple element] should be the role of the environmental and magic devices that produce Elemental Stones, but since I can arbitrary change spirits into the element I want using Spirit Magic, I can produce Elemental Stones as long as I can provide a lot of Magic Essence.
Since I know a place with a lot of Magic Essence, right now I'm mass producing Elemental Stones of various elements.
I've also gotten my hands on the high purity Crystal type Elemental Stones too, although in small quantity, I'm planning to use them for my companions.

--The dream is expanding.

In addition, regarding the matter about the apostle--.

During our visits to Kogeoku Kingdom and three other kingdoms, we found two places with traces of a white-robed apostle.
A manager of a mine who employed children slaves and members of crime guild who were making Fiend Drug-kind of drug were turned into salt pillars.
In both cases, only the perpetrators were punished, the mastermind behind the cases were left alone, so the same things occured again.

For the former, I exchanged the children slaves for small-sized doll

products of Echigoya Firm, while for the later, I exposed the mastermind, handed him over to the king and completely erased the manufacturing formula of the drug.
I employed the doctors and the alchemists who were forced to create the drug to work in the workshop of Echigoya Firm in Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital.

Further, I was worried whether the people of Kiwolk Kingdom were turned into salt, so I visited there as Kuro but I couldn't find anyone who seemed to be the apostle.

◇

Today, the late-starter group has gone to the inner part of Selbira's labyrinth upper layer to check their new equipment and level up, and Hikaru has gone to the former depressed demon lord's place to play with the Siberian Husky-like dog.

And, the members of Team Pendragon are--.

"Tama and Pochi who went ahead to be the Seko will return soon. Are you ready?"
"Completed setting the『Net』so I report."
"Nn, perfect."
"The preparation for the Spread Cannon Type Three is complete too."
"I've put the space magic's『Labyrinth』here too. We can thoroughly beat the ones that escape the shooting."

It seems they're just about to get rid of the small fries when I come to see them.
I can see Pochi and Tama taking along herds of monsters from beyond the ruined city.

I thought being Seko meant you should drive them from behind though.... well I guess it's fine.

This is one of the city in the [Blue Territory] to the southwest of the kingdom.
The hunting ground has been changed here since the monsters in middle layer of Selbira's labyrinth seemed like they'd go extinct when we were leveling up during our journey.

It looked like I'd disturb everyone's concentration if I just showed up, so I'll be watching them from the back for now.

"First~"
"Pochi was one step faster nodesu."

Behind the two who finished together, a light net lifted up.
This is Nana's [Fortress] added with paralyzing adhesive feature to capture targets.

"Shooting start!"

With Liza's signal, Lulu fired her accelerated cannon.
Innumerable rain of shells infringed the small-sized monsters, decreasing the number greatly.

"The big ones are coming. One on the left, two on the right. All of them are of level 50 class."
"Acknowledged. Mia, the Sand Hell."
"Nn, execute."

Receiving Arisa's report, Liza gave the next instruction.
Mia nodded and then sand in the open space forward began to move like a creature.

Right at then, a large Dragon Snake (Huge Naga) that looks like a snake with wings appeared.
Behind it, I could saw a herd of Venom Naga that are at level mid-40s behind it, they seemed to be its followers.

Even though the Naga has 'Snake' on its name, it's a monster that has limbs and ant-like wings, it looks like a skink lizard with elongated body.
I want to press a question to the one who named it.

"A mere snake pretending to be a dragon, how ridiculous so I announce!"

The mid and large sized ones are roused by Nana's provocation.

"Arisa, the wings."
"Okey, here comes the dimensional cut."

Arisa invoked space magic chantlessly, cutting the Huge Naga's wings and minced the Venom Naga that followed behind it.

"Arisa no good no good~"
"That's right nanodesu! If you cut the yummy Naga like that, you can't eat their guts nodesuyo!"

Since the meat of Naga are delicious eaten in kabayaki-style, Tama and Pochi faulted Arisa's barbaric act.

"You two, save the complaint. Take care of the ones on the left side."
"Aye aye~"
"Yes nanodesu."

With Liza's instruction, Tama and Pochi dashed while leaving golden trails behind.

"Eri eri buun, nanodesu!"

Pochi who misspelled the new Aerial Boost feature of the Golden Armor flew toward the Naga literally as quick as the wind.
This Aerial Boost feature uses Wind Stone as its core since I got a lot of them, and since it seems more useful than I thought, I'm planning to add them to the other girls' armors.

Liza used Flickering Movement to assault the Naga to the right.

"Apprehend."

Mia muttered a word, and then the sand on the ground apprehended the Naga's legs and bodies.
It seems she used the Sand Giant that fought the Floor Master in Selbira's upper layer as a trap this time.

"Shadow clone cut~?"

Tama who's in golden armor with a pink mantle divided into 12 bodies and toyed with the Naga.
I've also mastered ninjutsu taught by Tama-sensei, but since I can't use it as good in practice, I can't put it into practical uses as good as Tama.

And, on Tama's side, Pochi cuts the Huge Naga's snake using Magic Edge three times her height.

"Pochi, switch~?"
"Roger nanodesu."

Looks like Pochi who has a powerful offensive ability in a single strike is in charge of the Huge Naga while Tama who can eliminate great number of enemies while toying around is in charge of the Naga's herds.
Tama decapitated the Naga's head one by one while saying, "Nin nin."
Looks like she's being careful not to damage the poison gland properly.

She's fully eager to eat them.

"Liza-san, the boss is going to make its move soon."
"Understood."

Arisa who was in charge of enemy search warned Liza who was peerlessly trampling down the enemies with two spears.
The Dragon Spear Heiron that Liza holds is the same as before, but the Magic Spear Douma has been improved to become the Magic Spear Douma Kai.
I plated the tip of the Magic Spear Douma with Adamantite using alchemy.
It's not of even plating, I've made it so that it'll generate drill-shaped blast when she shoots Magic Edge Cannon with it.
Thanks to that, the Magic Edge Cannon's penetration power has been increased by around 20%,

"Golem-san, please take the monsters' bodies while being careful not to damage the meat, two at a time."

--MVA.

Lulu ordered the golem unit to collect the monsters' bodies.
The golems have human-shaped upper bodies and spider-shaped lower bodies as I assumed that they were going to work in a ruined city.

"Meatt"
"Nanodesu!"

Tama whose ears straightened up and Pochi whose tails was swinging around came back bringing the Naga's heads.
According to the two, the meat here are the most delicious.

In such peaceful atmosphere, the boss that Arisa warned earlier showed

up, turning the situation around.

A snake monster as huge as the heavenly dragon showed itself while scattering the wreckage of the castle in the center of the ruined city.
It doesn't have wings like the Naga, but it's floating above the ground, gliding toward us.

"Uwaaah, level 90 you serious. I think we really have to call Master here."

We haven't meet a powerful enemy for a long time.

"Level 90 is it.... It is a fitting opponent."
"Don't worry be happy~?"
"I-it's alright nanodesu. Pochi is fine against that much nanodesu."

Liza puts the Magic Spear Douma Kai into the magic bag and grasps the Dragon Spear Heiron while looking grim.
Tama seems carefree, but Pochi looks to be anxious enough to hide her tail between her legs.

Certainly, it's an opponent that these girls likely won't be able to beat with their current levels.

By the way, everyone here besides Mia is level 60.
Only Mia is level 58 since she needs a lot of exp.

『Master, it's an emergency. Some level 90 snake came out.』
『Roger, I'm going now.』

Arisa asked for reinforcement through [Telephone].
I pretend to have just teleported in, appearing behind Arisa and the others.

"I'm here."

"Fast"

Well that's because I've been watching from behind since awhile ago.
The meat and the material will be injured if I fight it normally, so I paralyze the snake with an advanced water magic spell.

While everyone is attacking the snake once, I call Hikaru who's visiting the former depressed demon lord Shizuka with [Telephone] to come here.

"Kept you waiting, what's with that snake."
"That seems to be the boss here. The level is just right for you I called you to strike it with a Force Spear once."
"Ehehe, thank you, Satouuu."

It seems Hikaru has gotten used to calling me Satou.
Hikaru's level has increased to 91 since I usually call her when we fight a powerful enemy like this.

She chantlessly produces a Force Spear and hits the snake.
Next, I just need to lift the snake's head with [Magic Arm] and cut it with the advanced light magic spell [Photon Laser], finished.

"Your strength is absurd like always...."
"As expected of my Satou."

Astonished Arisa and delighted Hikaru said.
However, the "my" part was unnecessary.

The other girls seem to be full of appetite, they rush to gather the meat.
I pat the two's heads and go to where everyone is to collect the snake's body into my Storage.

◇

"Are you going to attract emigrants once you've ruled the City Core?"
"No, I don't have such plan. I'll cover the city with space magic and forest magic barrier to prevent monster coming in though."
"Then you're not going to use it for anything?"
"Since the climate is of southern countries and all, I'm thinking of preparing the soil and let the golems to make an orchard or rice field inside the rampart."

If I link the golems with the City Core, even golems without magic cores will have no need of magic power from the user.
It's the same structure as the golems inside labyrinths.

"And so, Mito. How's Shizuka's condition?"
"Nn~, how do I say it, she's enjoying her lonely life to the full you see."

--What the heck's that?

"It's like an embodiment of a life of a single woman of around thirty. She's growing vegetables and herbs on the field, she makes teas and pot-pourri from the herbs, she makes jam and sweets from the fruits and honey gathered by the Living Dolls in the forest. She also said that she went for a stroll with her Siberian Husky, Wanfu, in the morning until the river, fishing and collecting pretty stones there."

It's like a normal rural life, but as long a she's happy then all is good.

She's self-sufficient with the Living Dolls working for the necessities, I also deliver flavoring and books through the brownies or Hikaru who also look her condition once in a while.
According to Hikaru, it seems Shizuka loves literary, she's drawn various things in small books.
She didn't want to show it to me for some reason, but forcing her would

not be good so I didn't press it further.

I collect the meat while only leaving the share for today's lunch.

Since Arisa and the others are going to explore the city to search for any remnant of monsters, I've decided to join the exploration once I go to the Selbira Labyrinth.
Looks like Hikaru is not going back to Shizuka's place as she's accompanying Arisa.
Further, as there are archives and treasures hidden by magic in this city, I'm looking forward to it already.

◇

It seems the late-starter group is fighting Blast Corns and a Marionette Rafflesia that's manipulating demi goblins and demi ogres in the plant area.

Their pace is slower than the forerunner group, but all members of the late-starter group have broken through level 40, Zena-san is level 41, Sera is level 42.
Further, as the members of Echigoya Firm are busy with their main occupation, their levels are still at the first-half of 30 with no change.
I've power-leveled Aoi boy and the new manager candidates to level 15.

"....■■■■■ Laser"

Wielding a light wand, Sera who is now able to use mid level light magic sliced the gigantic demi ogres all at once.
Since humanoid monsters can only be used to become fodders for monsters raised for power-leveling usage, there's no problem in handling them carelessly.

The current Sera is able to use most holy magic including prayer magic, I don't know whether it's because she healed a lot of people who suffered from epidemic disease in a country we visited or because she simply leveled up.
Since she can easily heal lost limbs, ruptured internal organs or other fatal wounds, my magic potion hasn't got its turn lately.

Sera safely flings away a Demi Goblin Assassin that jumped out of a nearby thicket.
It's the result of learning the art of self-defense under Lulu.

Not only Sera, the princess and Zena-san also learned the self-defense art.
It seems they're also interested in staff-fighting art recently.

"Imperial Golem Guard third!"

The princess ordered the golem to receive the flung demi goblin to kill it.
The princess turns her line of sight to Zena-san who's flying in the sky.

"Zena! You must not go forward alone!"
"I'm sorry Tina-sama."

The princess warned Zena-san who was flying with flight magic to look for the Marionette Rafflesia that was manipulating the demi ogres.
I saw a Blast Corn beyond the thicket shooting at Zena-san with exploding bullets.

"--Kya"

Zena-san screamed shortly, but Sera's defensive magic protected her from the bullet exploding near her.

"Let me go and defeat that corn."

『Karina-dono, there's a monster to the left!』

Lady Karina who's dual wielding heavy maces on both hands swings the one on her left hand to strike a slime-shaped Metal Eater that Raka warned.

"Raka-san!"
『Understood.』

Lady Karina who's bad at Magic Operation relies on Raka to activate the electric discharge circuit in the Heavy Mace to thoroughly burn the Metal Eater, and then she jumps into the thicket.
The sound of Lady Karina's heavy mace hitting the Blast Corn beyond the thicket reverberates.

Since the clumsy Lady Karina wasn't able to use her old hammer main weapon, she's shifted to using the heavy mace simplistically like batting. Since Raka's grapple and equipment boost's reach is short, she only uses that one reservedly.

"....■■■■ Divine Sonic"

Wielding a wind wand, Zena-san supported Lady Karina who was seemingly about to be surrounded by a herd of Blast Corns with magic. The power of the advanced spell of wind magic is magnificent, every one of the monsters besides the one in front of Lady Karina has been neutralized.

The monsters that had resistance against wind were eliminated by Zena-san's newly learned magic and rifle-type magic gun.
In addition to the advanced spells of wind magic, Zena-san is also now able to use lightning magic and ice magic until elementary level.
It seems she's unable to decide which one she's going to use as her sub.

"Everyone! 『Droon』 golem has found the main body of Marionette Rafflesia. Heavyweight golem one to six, charges toward 3 o'clock direction!"

Sera, Zena-san and Lady Karina gather with the princess's report.
The automatic flight [Drone] golem is something that she made herself with her own alchemy and magic.

Due to the influence of having in charge of operating the golems and her interest in magic tools creation with her alchemy skill she had from the beginning, now her position is like my pupil in the creation of magic tools and golems.
Since she's not suited to direct battles despite learning the self-defense art, she doesn't have any special weapon, instead small animal-shaped golems with stun functions are always by her side as her guards.

"Zena!"
"Yes, Karina-sama!"

Zena-san carrying Lady Karina dances in the air, they head toward the Marionette Rafflesia while almost touching the ceiling, and then they do a nose dive.

"Here I go!"

Zena-san and Lady Karina put their sole of feet to each other and then kick reciprocally to accelerate even more.

"Rapid start Karina Ki--"

Before Lady Karina could speak until the end, her kick pierced through the Marionette Rafflesia's petal.

--FUWANNNNNNNNA.

While scattering some suspicious pollens, the Marionette Rafflesia stops moving.
Lady Karina crawled out of the body while coughing violently.

Sera rushed to her in a hurry and used detoxification magic on Lady Karina.

.....Do assaults in moderation okay.

◇

After retrieving the late-starter group from the labyrinth, we met up with Arisa, Hikaru and the others to enjoy the exploration.

"I never thought that I would safely set my foot in the Blue Territory."
"Th-this is the Haunt of Blue is it...."

Sera and the princess look around the ruin while stuttering their words.
It seems Lady Karina and Zena-san have never heard of the Blue Territory.

I'll guide them to the treasury for the occasion.

"Here is strange~?"
"There's no smell of meat nodesuyo?"

Tama tilted her head in confusion before the hidden magic circle.
Pochi sniffed with her nose but it seems there was no smell that was of interest for her.

"There are traces of someone doing a consecration ceremony. I can't feel

any miasma."

Sera commented while touching the magic circle.
When the magic power was put into the magic circle, some words appeared.

"It seems there are Command Words written in ancient language. Umm, 『Even if the city is destroyed by the tsunami, people will not perish. We will give rewards to those who liberate the city.』 is written, the Command Word is--Baalus?"
"It's safe since there's one character difference huh."
<TLN: reference to Castle in the Sky, should be 'Balus'.>

Arisa was shocked when she heard the word of destruction from a famous anime coming out of Hikaru's mouth, but she muttered in relief when she noticed her mistake.
Everyone besides me doesn't understand the meaning, they look wondering.

『Regenerate (Baalus)』

>[Ancient Language] Skill Acquired.

The magic circle lits up when Hikaru recited the Command Word in Ancient Language, then a door appeared out of nowhere.

Golden brightness jumped into our eyes when the door was opened.
The inside is wide, the inner wall seems like something made from the space magic's [Garage].

Everyone rushes happily into the golden brightness.
Lady Karina and Zena-san seem to be nervous with the large amount of treasures.

"Gold silver~"

"There is a bar too nodesu."

The bar-like thing that Pochi picked up appears to be a magic tool called [Illusion Smash (Dispel Bar)]
It appears to be an artifact.

"These are the lost handicrafts from the era of Furu Empire."
"How nostalgic, I hated the nobles of that country, but their buildings like the royal castle one were very excellent."

It seems Sera is interested with the picture and works of art on the wall.
For Hikaru, it seems they're things she knew before going into the sleep.

From the opposite side of the beastkin girls who are examining the weapons, and Nana and Lulu who are looking for cute things, someone calls me.

"Satou! It seems there's a library inside."
"Yay, I wonder if there's any magic book?"
"Expectation."

Arisa and Mia gleefully run toward the library that the princess found.

After picking the loot, we went to the solitary island palace and enjoyed the Naga kabayaki and pop-corns made of the Blast Corns.

"Yummaye~"
"Lulu's boxes really are delicious nodesu."

We're eating the Naga kabayaki while listening to the sound of wind bells.
The thick meat with fat is truly delicious.

Thus, in contrary to our peaceful days, the hero is currently struggling in the underground labyrinth located in a remote region of the Weaselkin Empire.
I'm worried to hear that they get serious injuries sometimes, but according to the communication, it seems they're closing in the demon lord's main body while defeating the split bodies.
Apparently the magic tool provided by the weaselkin empire is doing its job.

I thought they're taking a bit too long in defeating the demon lord, but according to Hikaru it's normal to take several months to subjugate a demon lord.
She said that it even took several years in her case.

--Do your best, Hero.

While I was cheering for Hero Hayato in my mind, the airship entered the territory of the pink haired princess Menea's kingdom, Rumooku Kingdom for the tour.

It'll be nice if I can read the documents regarding people of another world in Rumooku Kigndom--.

14-28. Water Peach Kingdom (1)

*

Satou's here. It's a common story in earth for a king to be bestowed his throne by the god. I'm intrigued to see how it is in a world with gods in reality.

◇

"Potato~?"
"It's another potato-san nanodesu."

The ears of Pochi and Tama who peeked at the stall dropped down in dejection.
We're in one of the food areas in the Royal Capital of Rumooku Kingdom.

The touring airship is scheduled to arrive tomorrow, but since I found out that there was a festival here, we went ahead to treat ourselves with some sightseeing.

We're going incognito this time so so we've separated into three teams consisting of three to five people each. It'd be too conspicuous if we were all together.
I'll be going with a different team every two hours.
The members of the first team are the beastkin girls, Lady Karin and Zena-san.

"You guys from another country? Rumooku has a lot of dishes made with Diet Potato you see."

An apekin stall shopkeeper showed us some white-colored potatoes.
He presented some sliced unpeeled potatoes to us.

"If you think I'm lying, try eating these sliced Diet Potatoes."
"Lie~?"
"Lying is bad nodesuyo?"

Pochi and Tama who were lured by the sliced potatoes sniffed the smell.
Being hesitant in biting a raw vegetable whole is something that happens a lot in TV programs about diet.

"Sliced and diced~?"
"Pochi thinks potatoes are tastier boiled or baked than raw nodesu."

Tama and Pochi who took the sliced potatoes nibbled them.

"It's a potato."
"It's unexpectedly tasty desuwa."
"--It is, isn't it."

After the two, Liza and Lady Karina tried them, and Zena-san who lost to the peer pressure also took it.

"What about you young master?"
"I might as well, please."

Losing to the apekin old man's glance, I also tried it after everyone.

The texture feels like a carrot, the taste is mild, like a warmed potato.
It's hard to say it's bad, but it's not bad enough to make you grimace.

"Is Diet Potato a specialty around here?"
"Yeah, seems that it's only grown in this country--"

I asked the shopkeeper about it since I never saw the potato in Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital that had plenty of foodstuff in circulation,

turned out it's a prohibited commodity to export.

"--Prohibited?"
"Yeah, in the past the Hero King Yamato-sama told the king that 'it's [Calirozeo] so don't', you see."

--I guess he means calorie zero?　I'll ask Hikaru herself later.

"If you only ever eat Diet Potatoe you'll lose weight and die, something like that?"
"Oh what, you already knew huh. That's right, it's fine if you eat it with other food, but mysteriously it seems you'll die if you only eat Diet Potato. I don't feel sick even though I've eaten it for 40 years, some strange story that one's."

As expected, looks like it's a low calorie foodstuff like konjac.
I'd like to sell these in powdered form for the nobles as way to do diet.

I'd feel bad if we only sampled his food, so I bought the Diet Potatoes and Wrapped Berries for several people.
I put the portions for other teams into my storage while pretending I was putting them into my bag.

"Master~?"

Tama's ears are twitching.

"There's smell of grilled meat from over there nodesu!　It must be wolf or bear meat nodesu!"

Pochi who's swinging her tail so hard like it'd get torn off catches my sleeve and jumps around.

"Master, I will be going to check them."

"Tama too~?"
"Pochi also wants to check nodesu!"

Apparently, Tama, Pochi and even Liza are tired with the potatoes already.
After declaring so with sharp faces, they took the initiative to move ahead and scout where the meat were.

"Pochi, Tama, wait!"

Lady Karina pursued the beastkin girls impatiently.

"Then let's go too."
"Yes, Satou-san."

Zena-san smiled when I exchanged look with her, we walked toward the crowd where the four disappeared into.
It'd be bad if I lost sight of Zena-san in this congested crowd so I joined hands with her.

◇

"--The second prince didn't agree with it right?"
"Yeah, he curtly refused saying that the weasels can't be trusted."

Attentive Ears skill caught that conversation from beyond the crowd.
I might have become a bit more sensitive to the word 'weasel'.

"Even without you guys there's no way the royalty of this country would agree to allow anyone search for treasures in the Fallen Castle."
"Why is that? It'll possible to better the finance of this poor country you know. The prince himself could use it to raise his succession precedence

right?"

Looking at the map, it seems the ones talking are a weaselkin merchant and a high level adventurer from Saga Empire.
The female adventurer is level 39, quite something.

"Only you guys who calculate things like that. There's a legend that said the ancestors of this kingdom's royalty were living in the Fallen Castle--the Floating Castle of Shadow Princess. The few who survived when it crashed in this country built this kingdom.... Putting your hands on that castle is not that different from raiding their ancestor grave site."
"Fumu, it appears I've forgotten that humans are creatures who put their priority in irrational things."

According to the Tour Book, the Fallen Castle the adventurer mentioned is an ancient ruin located in the forest to the northeast of this kingdom. Judging from the map, the center of the northeastern forest is a different map, that's probably it.

"We could build a sky mother ship that could surpass the Great Monstrous Fish if only we got our hands on the core part of the Fallen Castle...."
"That is if you can get it right? That place is a maze where even Shiga Kingdom's Hero King Yamato who challenged the place 600 years ago ran away from. It'll be a different story if you're only ravaging the entrance vicinity, but challenging the inner part is pretty much a suicide. I know since I've seen the absurdity of heroes by Hayato."

I'm intrigued with the core part of the Fallen Castle.... but I don't want to raid a tomb.
Looks like Hikaru had entered the place once, I'll ask her about it later.

"--Then, how about the job of carrying this magic tool into the Fallen Castle?"

"Huh? What's this egg?"
"A magic creature for investigation will appear if you recite the Command Word. I'll pay you 100 gold coins if you can carry this inside."
"It's hard to use your country's money. I'll do it for 150 gold coins of Shiga Kingdom or 75 gold coins of Saga Empire."
"Very well, I'll pay with Shiga Kingdom gold coins. 30 gold coins in advance, 120 after."
"Got it, so--"

A reserved voice broke my concentration in the middle of the sinister talk.

"Satou-san, is there anything wrong?"
"No, there was just someone who looked like an acquaintance of mine, but it seems I was mistaken."

I made some fuzzy excuse since Zena-san looked worried.

Looks like the two from earlier have gone into the inn to talk in private.
It smells of trouble so I'll put markers on them for now.

As I walked on the street while exchanging some harmless conversation with Zena-san, we saw the head of a giant monster beyond the crowd.

"That seems to be the source of the smell."
"I-is that a monster?"
"Yes, apparently it's a monster called Fortress Tiger."

I saw its stuffed animal in the Duchy Capital museum back then.

It appears a Fortress Tiger that has been defeated by the soldiers is displayed as one of the main attractions of the festival.
A temporary stove has been put right beside the hind leg of the Fortress Tiger, and it seems people can eat it for free.

Maybe due to the beastly smell, the nearby people aren't approaching it, only people with poor clothes and men who seemed to be manual laborers are getting the meat skewers and stew dish.

When I was watching it, the beastkin girls came back with skewers in their hands.

"Toughie"
"It's like wyvern meat nanodesu."
"It does have toughness and chewiness doesn't it."

The beastkin girls are chewing the meat.

"Master, we have secured everyone's share."
"Yeah, thanks."
"Bon appétit."
"I'm, um, full so--"
"Understood, I will take full responsibility of Zena-sama's meat skewer."

I take the meat skewer Liza hands out.

....How do I say this, on top of the shoe sole-like texture, beast smell oozes out with every bite.
Frankly, it's bad.

Pochi ate the leftover, but I don't think I'll ever eat another of the meat.

Of course I thought of that in my mind, I didn't say it loud.
That's because there are people who are frantically eating that hard and unpleasant meat around.

Lady Karina gave up and Tama disposed her leftover.

"Soft! Even I can eat this."
"You're amazing young lady. Even grandma who doesn't have any tooth remaining can eat it!"

When I looked at the direction people were smiling happily at, I saw Lulu cooking beside the Fortress Tiger with a kitchen knife in one hand.
Looks like she was unable to only watch the troubled people and went to help.

Arisa, Mia, and the Princess are behind Lulu.

Arisa who noticed me made a 'look at the watch' gesture.
Looks like it's about time.

◇

"Hee, a scheme between adventurers and weaselkins huh."

I stealthily told the thing about the two earlier to Arisa.
I can't exactly say that it's a scheme, but I'm slightly bothered by it.

Mia, Lulu and the princess are enjoying malt starch syrup together.
The princess who saw her first starch syrup is full of curiosity.

"You knead two sticks like this round and round and it'll be tasty."
"L-like this?"

Lulu is teaching the princess the way to eat starch syrup, perhaps because the princess who's acting like a child looks cute.

Mia chants water magic [Slap Knead] to knead the starch syrup instantly while nodding.

This magic is an original spell I made by Mia's request when we were staying in the labyrinth city.
I'm wasting the skill I have if I do say so myself.

"Nn, mild."

While walking around the stalls and eating the starch syrup, we heard cheers and xylophone-like sound from the main street forward.

"I wonder what is it? Let's go and see it!"
"Nn, let's."

Arisa and Mia pull my hands and begin to run.

"Tina-sama, let us go too."
"Y-yes."

Lulu who's pulling the princess's hand also follow behind us in quick steps.

We're separated a bit far, but Lulu should be fine.
I heard some screams from hoodlums behind but it must have been my imagination.

With the strength of Arisa and Mia who are level 60 even though they're small, we push ourselves into a place where we can see the main street.
The role of apologizing to people who are glaring at us in annoyance inevitably falls to me.

"It looks somewhat like a float."
"Float?"
"Yes, the thing that looks like a portable shrine with wheels like that, I guess?"
<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Float_(parade)>

I didn't remember the accurate classification, so I explained to Mia hazily.
Arisa makes a visor with her hands on her head and gazes at the float coming here.
It looks hard to see for them so I lift both of them to make it easier.

"Uoooou.... Thank you."
"Thanks."

I smile back at Arisa who was surprised for suddenly being lifted and Mia, and watch the float together with Lulu and the princess who've met up with us.

The floats are, from the the first one; [The Pitch Silhouette of the Castle], [A Pink-haired Princess and a Black-haired Prince who are Sitting on Balcony-like Place in a Castle], and [The Noble Daughters wearing Attendant Clothes] floats.
The soldiers walking beside the floats are wearing pitch black cloth on their whole body, they look like dolls made of shadow.

There's no doubt that they're festival floats to worship the ancestors of Rumooku Kingdom and the Fallen Castle that came out in the talk between the female adventurer and the weaselkin earlier.

According to AR reading, the pink-haired princess seems to be the sixth princess of Rumooku Kingdom.
Looking like Princess Menea, she's a seven-year-old pretty little girl who looks calm and quiet.

"Today Rumia-sama looks graceful doesn't she."
"That's cause she's acting as the Shadow Princess in this festival."
"She usually rode a horse with her brother princes, so it's hard to imagine her like this."

Judging from the surrounding people's talk, the sixth princess is originally a lively girl--no.
According to the AR reading, the sixth princess's name is Rimia.
According to their talk, that's the the twin sister of the fifth princess Rumia.
Princess Rimia probably has little exposures to the citizens.

The black-haired boy who's sitting beside her seems to be the real twelve-year-old fourth prince.
Since the royalty seems to be all pink-haired, he's probably wearing a black wig.

◇

After watching the floats,

"Kyaa, I'm sorry."
"Please excuse me too. Are you alright?"
"Un, I'm okay."

I saw pink hair under the apologizing girl's hood.
She's probably the rumored fifth princess, Rumia whom the citizens talked about during the parade earlier.

Looks like the lively princess is enjoying the festival in secret.
Some soldiers and maids who seem to be her escorts are coming from the other side of the crowd.

Princess Rumia glanced back and then she ran to a narrow alley in a hurry.

--That place is bad.

My Attentive Ears skill heard a small scream and the sound of something being put into a sack.

Guess it's unavoidable.
I put off joining with Hikaru and the others and went to the narrow alley.

"The hell you want"
"Oy oy stop with your sudden threatening attitude. Look at that, the rich kid is trembling."

Two hoodlums are glaring at me while tying a sack.

The empty-headed senior-looking guy took out a hatchet and licked it to show me.
It's a situation that appears often in a story, but I wonder if his tongue is cut?

"What're ya smiling about! Are you mocking us!"

Maybe because I was thinking whatever like that the hoodlum swung down his hatchet to my shoulder.
I lightly evaded, circled behind him, and kicked his big butt, sending him flying to some rubble on the ground.

"How dare you--"

When the other hoodlum released his hand from the sack and drew a dagger, I sent him flying with my hand.

With a whomp, the senior hoodlum's scream resounded in the back alley.
I didn't particularly aim for it, but it seems I hit the ball squarely.

As the two who were entangled tried to get up, I reaped their

consciousness with a stunner made with Lightning Stone.

Before I release the princess from the sack I use light magic to hide my countenance.
There's no need to raise a flag with a little girl.

"Are you injured anywhere?"
"U-un. I'm fine--Farsa!"
"Princess-sama!"

The dumbfounded princess called her acquaintance on the street with a loud voice.
The escort knights who followed from behind and noticed the disturbance in the back alley drew their swords and stood to protect the princess.

"Are you Your Highness's escorts?"
"That's right, who are you."
"I'm not worthy enough to give my name. I only saved the princess since I saw the two people over there trying to kidnap her, I'll leave the rest to you."
"Oy, wait--"

I ignored the knight calling me and kicked the alley's roof to move to the roof, then I canceled the light magic and warped to the place near Hikaru and the others.

◇

"Floating Castle made by God, the beautiful maiden with pink hair will be the bride of God--"

After meeting with Hikaru and the others, coaxed by Sera, we went to

watch a show that was performing in an open space nearby.
The program seems to be about this country's founding.

The actors aren't that good, but the scenario is quite something.
Furthermore, the woman who's playing as the beautiful maiden is quite attractive and glamorous.

"Has Mito ever gone inside the Fallen Castle?"
"Un, I entered by the request of the king at that time, but the sentry shadows that were protecting the innermost room were too strong so I escaped."
"Yama--Mito-sama did?"
"Un, each one of them wasn't as strong as a greater demon, but they kept reappearing every time I defeated one--"

Nana turns her face to us who are chatting.

"You should be quiet when you're watching the play so I warn."
"""We're sorry."""

It's the proper thing to do, so I watch the play in silent afterward.

During the climax of the play, a group of people riding horses ran past the main street and then the kingdom knights went noisily with the sound of their metal armor clashing, clank clank.

"Bad manners so I criticize."

Nana is in bad mood since the tactless sound disturbed the climax of the play.

On the stage, the scene of the dog-headed evil god fighting against the white main god continues on.
The god splendidly slew the evil god but the evil god used a magic before

it died and the floating castle crashed.
Pink-haired prince and princess appeared from the fallen castle, and were told that their mother who was the wife of the god had died.

"It appears that gods and humans are not meant to be together.... My beloved children, I bestow tis' blood and blessing unto you. Build a good country."
"At your will, father--no, Great God-sama."

The last scene seems to be a divine blessing that are common among royalty.

◇

Before joining with others I opened the map since I was bothered a bit, but it seems the horse-riding earlier isn't related to the female adventurer and the weaselkin who were talking about something shady earlier. The latter seems to be in the Royal Capital right now.

And then, after we met up, we were able to secure a private room in the best restaurant in the city according to the prime minister's Tour Book. Normally there should not be any free room during a festival, but since someone who made a reservation canceled the room due to an urgent business, we slipped in during that chance.

The menu is a mountain of small pies made from the Diet Potatoe we ate in the noon.
Diet Potato and mushroom pies, Diet Potato and blueberry pies, Diet Potatoe and deer kidney pies, boiled unfamiliar plants for the salad, and peeled sliced Diet Potato and mashed potato are piled up.
As usual the menu mainly consisted of Diet Potato, but the main dish, the whole roast of a giant Blue Horn Deer that the contracted hunters of the

restaurant got appeared.
The meal began with Arisa's lead "Itadakimasu" like usual.

"Meat delish~?"
"There's meat in this pie nodesu."
"Master, please enjoy this deer tendon meat stew. The cartilage that's been cooked together with it is crispy and tasty."

I put the dishes recommended by the beastkin girls into my mouth in turns.
The grilled venison that Tama recommended was fatty with light flavor, quite delicious.
The kidney pie I tried to eat in a British restaurant in the past was quite smelly I couldn't eat it, but the kidney pie here was quite delicious, I didn't know whether it was because the chef was good or the kidney was fresh. There was a little of unique smell but it was hidden well by the herb, it was quite satisfactory enough.

The thick stew Liza recommended was warm and felt good in the stomach.
I can't get tired of green-peas-like beans mixed inside. It makes me wanting for some wine.

"Mwuu, mushroom pie."
"Wait a minute, don't put that many to the plate."

I stopped Mia who pushed her recommendation and dealt with it after cleaning up the plate first.

As we eat the tasty dishes in relish, I'm hearing some disturbing conversation from outside the private room.
The wall here seems to be thin.

"--looks like the Shadow Princess festival site was assaulted."

"The site did?"
"Who the accursed did."
"Are the prince and the princess in the site alright?"

It's probably about the young prince and princess that were in the noon parade.

"That's.... It seems Rumia-sama was kidnapped."
"How about the prince and the soldiers guarding them?"
"The prince is safe. The soldiers were, with paralyzing poisoned liquor--."

Looks like some trouble has sprung forth.

14-29. Water Peach Kingdom (2)

*

◆Royal Villa of Rumooku Kingdom◆

"--Your Highness, what did the weasel ask?"
"To let them enter the Shadow Castle, saying they would make it float again."

The second prince leisurely replied the cabinet minister from his faction who came to his room. <TLN: I wrote third instead of second on the previous chapter. Amended.>
The minister ordered an official behind him to vacate the soldiers outside the door and close it.

"The Shadow Castle? Is that possible?"
"Of course not."

The second prince raised the reasons why it's impossible one after another.

"The gate won't open unless you take a little girl wearing the『Necklace of Treasure Key』that can't be taken out except during the grand festival, on top of that the castle is protected by sentries that even made that Hero King Yamato ran away y'know?"

The legend passed through the second prince's mind.
The hero king Yamato who defeated the great demon lord, that ruined the ancient Furu Empire which reigned supreme in this continent, the symbol of the [Strongest].
An existence that can't even be defeated by the [Strongest], he can't imagine it.

"Still, it's too bad isn't it. If the god sentry weren't there, Your Highness could have gotten his hands on the treasures sleeping in the Shadow

Castle...."
"Are you implying me to raid the tomb?"
"Not at all, Your Highness will only take a little bit of inheritance from your ancestor."

The second prince's wavers with the minister's words.
As if taking advantage of that, the official behind the minister murmurs.

"Perhaps the weaselkin's underling that contacted the crime guild the other day was related to this?"
"--You mean they instigated the crime guild people to kidnap Rumia who'll be acting as the Shadow Princess?"
"With all dues respect...."

The minister assented to the second prince's worry.

"Don't tell me--the B-class adventurers who had an audience with His Majesty were also summoned by them?"
"It is possible. There's also the report of a scout-looking adventurer going astray in the prohibited place in the royal castle."

It's probably hard to infiltrate the Shadow Castle no matter how many riff-raff you send there, but if you are together with adventurers most active on the frontier, the success rate should be different.

"Let the knights to stand by near the ceremony site."

The second prince stood up while giving an order to the minister.

"I'll go out too. It's the older brother's job to save his little sister."

The thought of saving his little sister from the crime guild and the adventurers, getting the treasures they have and then confiscating the disrespectful weaselkin's firm floats in his mind.

There is no one here who pointed out about him counting the chickens before they're hatched.

◆Rimia the Sixth Princess of Rumooku◆

"Rumia is calm today."

My heart aches hearing Nii-sama who spoke and smiled lightly.
Even though I've switched with Rumia ane-sama to do the role of the Shadow Princess in the festival, Nii-sama doesn't notice it at all.
Perhaps brother doesn't recognize me, who doesn't have pink hair, as his little sister.

"If you're tired, let me be the one to greet the citizens. Rumia can just smile suitably while drinking the fruit water."
"Thank you very much. Nii-sama."

I replied my brother kindness by smiling my best.

--The day darkens before long and a bonfire is lighted in the center of the ceremony site.

"Hou, this is some tasty wine...."
"It was brought in a barrel by the representative earlier."
"Must be a wealthy merchant to bring a barrel of an expensive wine like this."

Nii-sama sips the wine in good mood.
I've never drunk wine before but people said that the wine in this kingdom is astringent and bad so this must've been imported from some foreign country.

"Here's some grape water for Rumia-sama."
"Thank you."

I drink transparent red drink offered by an unfamiliar maid.

--Sweet.

It's as classy as the sugar water that I got during Nii-sama's coming of age ceremony back then.
I forget my depressed mood just now and drink the sweet grape water.

My view shakes.

I staggered, fell to the ground and looked at the surrounding with disorderly mind.

--Everyone is sleeping?

"Hey, isn't the all-important princess awake there."
"Keh, that damn weasel gave us a defective product."
"Oy! Save your complaint. Let's get out quickly."

I could only shiver with pale face hearing the violent words.
Just when I thought my hand was caught, I was tossed inside a sack with strange smell and carried like a baggage.

"N-o, get--"

My frail protest reached no one, and I fainted as I was carried roughly.

◆Crime Guild◆

"Boss! The cavalry are chasing us from behind."
"What?!"

When the crime guild boss looked at the back, he saw cavalry wearing scale mails.
Despite their heavy armor, their horses speed is faster.

"10 horses all huh.... There's only a few of them, but they appeared too fast."

They must've been on stand by even before the princess was kidnapped.
It's an impossible tact for the incompetent knights of this country.

"Tsk, did we get set up by the weasel bastard?"
"Boss, those are the second prince's troops."
"That schemer daredevil second prince sure is fast. Oy, use the smoke ball we took from Shiga Kingdom explorers. Throw it after we pass that watchtower!"
"Yea"

When the boss passed through a watchtower for festival use, he cut the tower's ropes.
Slightly afterward, his subordinate threw a white bundle, and then smoke covered the surrounding explosively.

Without caring the cries in the back, the men ran pass the Royal Capital through the opened gate.
They smashed several festival decorations as they passed the gate and let a subordinate set them to fire.

"Boss, is this alright? Doing this much."
"Don't worry. We just have escape the country once we got the treasures in the Fallen Castle."

The boss laughed off the vice's worry.
There were many cases where pursuers couldn't catch up to them considering the fact that there's a little traffic between the cities and the borders of the eastern countries.

Although, cases of kidnapping a royalty and pillaging the national treasure like these are probably going to be an exception.
Only several people including the boss and the vice notice it.

"What if we don't get the treasures?"

The timid vice asked the boss while whipping his horse.

"No worries. The things we stole from the prince and the princess earlier are already valuable enough. We could even get peerage rank if we sold this『Necklace of Treasure Key』this princess had to some king of the neighboring countries."
"As expected of boss, you're well thought!"

Unlike the gloomy vice, the subordinates applauded the boss.

The men who escaped the cavalry leisurely ran through the forest toward the Shadow Castle on their horses.

◆Rumia the Fifth Princess of Rumooku◆

"Rimiaaaaa!"

Farsa, my wet mother held me back as I was going to dash out.

My little sister Rimia was kidnapped by bad masked men before my eyes.

"Let me go."
"Princess-sama, you must not."

Farsa checked with the escort soldiers about the safety on the surrounding, and let the escort soldiers to go to the guard station after confirming it's safe.

And then a horse riding group appeared.
They're probably the knights of this country.

"You guys, chase the thieves! They must have gone toward the Shadow Castle."
"""OU!"""

While leaving several people riding horses here, they chase after the thieves who kidnapped Rimia.

"Ah, that's the crest of the second prince?"

Hearing Farsa, I look up, certainly, the dignified older Nii-sama is there.

"Nii-sama!"
"--Rumia? Why are you here?"
"It's terrible! Rimia was kidnapped by bad people."
"So it's like that...."

Nii-sama's face is scary.
He must be angry at the bad people who kidnapped Rimia.

"You should go back to the castle--oy, you guys, call the soldiers in the castle. I'll take my little brother to the court physician."

Older Nii-sama took younger Nii-sama and rode the horse toward the court physician in the castle.

The other cavalry also run off to call other people.

"Oh?　What happened here?"

As I was looking at that, my body shivered when I heard the voice that suddenly appeared behind me.
There, a woman with red blazing hair, a thin scout-like man, and a giant warrior twice as big as a normal adult--the Saga Empire adventurers who visited the castle back then are standing.

"--Nn? Aren't you princess-chan? What's wrong, you look like you'd cry you know?"

I told the peering female adventurer-san about the situation, bursting like a broken dam, and asked for help.

"Alright, I've lost to princess-chan's spirit who wants to help her little sister. This B-class adventurer Kaizemain-sama will pitch in and help!"

Even though it should have been reassuring, I departed the Royal Capital while feeling like a rat who's being toyed with by a cat somehow.

"Princess-sama, let's leave it to His Highness second prince to save Rimia-sama."
"What're you going to do princess-chan."
"I'm going. Please take me."
"Alright!　You'll be safe and sound with us!"

My wet nurse objected even now, but I want to save Rimia who changed place with me due to my selfishness.

I thought we were going to chase them with horses, but we went to a farm village near the Royal Capital instead.

Three golems came out of one of the sheds.

"These are our『Sea Fire War Ogres』you see."

Female adventurer-san showed the golems while smiling like Nii-sama when he was showing off his toys.

"....The golems used by the weaselkin."
"That's right, wet nurse-dono is knowledgeable huh."

Farsa who's shaking with pale face fainted when she saw female adventurer-san grinning.

"Oh oh?　We can't take along someone who's fainted. Let the people in the village take care of her."
"You say that after putting up that coercion."
"You said something?"
"N-no, nothing at all Nee-san."
"Then stop talking and do it quick."
"Yes, Nee-san."

The thin adventurer ran to the village ordered by female adventurer-san.

Still.... What is this coercion they talked about?

"Ize Neesan. The startup is complete."
"Alright, I'll go ahead with princess-chan. Go with that guy once he comes back."

I'm carried under female adventurer-san's arm, and taken onto the golem that's taller than the surrounding houses.
It's shorter than the balcony in the castle, but the shaking shaking cockpit is cold it's scary.

"We're going to run okay? Hold tight so you won't fall."

Without being able to reply to the cheerful female adventurer-san, I desperately clings to her waist.

Wait for me, Rimia.
I'll absolutely save you!

◆Weaselkin◆

"Then, take care of the firm."
"Yes, president."

After telling that to the ashratkin clerk, I get into the carriage.
I've only taken the female slave that has the [Item Box] skill along.

There will be little damage even if the firm is confiscated by the kingdom since I've taken the funds and the expensive items.

"Looks like Kaizemain-dono is heading toward the Shadow Castle successfully. It'll be the best if I can bring an Artifact from the era of god in the Shadow Castle, but bringing information from even one of the explorer probes should be enough to make His Majesty the emperor delighted. Nothing of value will be lost even if I lose one or two branch offices in a poor country."

I murmured alone and looked up, and then black shadows got reflected in my eyes.
The wind pressure shakes the carriage, the slave girl screams.

Four monsters met up with the merchant who got off the carriage.
Lizardkin and beastkin wearing slave collars are riding on the monsters'

back.

The things the slaves riding are tamed wyverns that only wealthy merchants have even in our Weasel Empire.

"President, we've come to pick you."
"Good work. Let these go to the Shadow Forest besides the one we're riding."

The Wyvern Riders flew off after receiving the magic tool to retrieve the Explorer Probe.

"President, Rumooku soldiers are heading here."
"Then let's go too."
"Is our destination the empire?"

The rabbitkin rider asked me who had ridden on the wyvern.

"No, go to Silga Kingdom before we return to the empire."
"Certainly."

The wyvern takes off while sliding and chipping the highway.

"I will not ask for something as extravagance as fang, I'd like to get claws, or thorns--or at least the scales."

I muttered while leaving my body to the body temperature of the slave clinging to me.

◆In the Forest of the Shadow Castle◆

"Damn it, why isn't the gate opening."

The necessary condition should have been fulfilled, the boss catches and pulls the little girl's hair.
The pink wig comes off of the princess who screams shortly, golden hair appears in the light from the torches.

"--A fake?"

The dark brown boss glared at the little princess.

"I'm not a fake."
"There's no point if a royalty doesn't have colored hair!　You damn fake."

The boss is still flinging violent words to the princess who's fighting back with a shaking voice.

"Can't be helped, the key is profitable enough. Let's scram."

Torches shines over the boss's curved sword which glitters suspiciously.
The curved sword casually swings down toward the princess who's edging back without even being able to scream.

Everyone expected blood to spill but in the next moment, they only heard the sound of the blade sinking into a wood.
In the place where the princess should have been, there's a log wrapped in dress--

"Utsusemi no jutsu~?"
"--Who the!"

Toward the voice that could be heard somewhere, the boss asked for its identity.

A masked boy appears with a gust of wind.

Beside him, there's a little golden armor wearing a pink mantle standing.

"Hello, nice to meet you. Tough I think our acquaintance will be short, best regards okay."

Hearing the boy who doesn't have a speck of tension, every member of the crime guild is trembling as if their spine has been thrust with an icicle.

14-30. Water Peach Kingdom (3)

*

Satou's here. I wonder who first popularized the death flag. Though, I feel the thing that made a friend who said, "I'll go on a ski trip with my girlfriend once I finished my course credit" to end up taking the supplementary lesson was the grudge of the unpopular colleagues. You shouldn't talk about your love affair out loud you know.

◇

"What's wrong Master?"
"--The princess of this country has been kidnapped, or so I heard."

I briefly answered Arisa who asked.

"Oh no! Then I'll go rescue her. Where's she now?"
"Oh no oh no~?"
"Pochi will also go rescuing nodesu."
"Protecting young organisms is indispensable and a must so I tell."

Hikaru stood up as if it was natural to go help.
As if pulled by her, Tama, Pochi and Nana also stood up.

Pochi and Tama are still holding their forks stuck with meat dish.

It's not like the princess is particularly our acquaintance and I think she should be saved by this country, but it appears such a thing is irrelevant for Hikaru and the others.

"I'll check it for a bit, wait--"

I told so to everyone and opened the map.
We don't know if she's really kidnapped just from a rumor.

The rumor said that Princess Rumia was kidnapped, but the one who rode the float was her little sister Princess Rimia.
I'll search for [Princess] instead of a specific person.

I ignore the luminous points of the princesses in the Royal Capital--there are two outside the city.

Looks like Princess Rimia is near the border of a different map where the Shadow Castle is.
There were several crime guild people close to her, but I don't know the exact number since they immediately went to a different map with Princess Rimia.

The other luminous point is in the middle of the mountain path between the Royal Capital and the Shadow Castle, moving at a speed faster than a horse.
This one seems to be Princess Rumia.

There's a luminous point with a marker near Princess Rumia.

Apparently, she's together with the female adventurer who contacted the weaselkin.
Her marker was in the Royal Capital when I checked it earlier, so she must have taken Princess Rumia from the Royal Capital after that.

I check the present situation of the princess by invoking the space magic [Clairvoyance].

The female explorer is moving in a golem together with princess Rumia in the cockpit.
The princess is desperately clinging to the female explorer while shutting

her eyes, there's no trace of her being violently restrained.
She probably sought the female explorer's help in order to save Princess Rimia.

"--How is it?"
"Princess Rimia has been kidnapped by the crime guild people, they're in the Shadow Forest. Princess Rumia seems to be chasing them."

Even if I said the princesses' names, it didn't really mean anything to everyone besides Hikaru and Arisa who had the personal appraisal skills, since the names weren't that important, I summarized the explanation.

"I'll help them out a bit."

It's not really our problem, but in order to enjoy the festival cuisine, I declared to save the princesses quickly.

"Wait."
"Please wait, Master."

Arisa and Liza controlled me who stood up.

"Although Master can probably do it alone, isn't it easier if we divide the work?"
"That's right. At lease please take Tama along."

I agreed to Arisa and Liza and it's decided that Hikaru and Arisa will go help Princess Rumia's side while I will go to Princess Rimia's side along with Tama.
The reason why Arisa is working with Hikaru is in order to secure the way to do teleportation for them.

--Putting that aside, Liza.

Please don't lift up Tama who's holding a venison in her mouth, presenting her to me like she's a stuffed toy.

"Don't worry be happy~"

◇

"Then, I'll leave this side to you."
"OK."
"Un, don't let your guard down okay."

I brought Hikaru and Arisa ahead of the place Princess Rumia is heading with space magic [Teleport Gate].
Hikaru is in Nanashi's disguise and Arisa is wearing the golden armor.

Afterward I opened a [Teleport Gate] in front of the Shadow Forest and moved with Tama there.
The Shadow Forest map is a teleportation-prohibited area just like the castle of Ban the True Ancestor in the labyrinth's lower layer so I couldn't directly teleport inside.

"The castle pitch black~?"

Tama pointed at a spire of a jet black castle that looks like a silhouette on top of the forest.
As one might expect of something called Shadow Castle, it's swaying like I'm looking at a mirage.

I hid a carved seal board to be the landmark for Arisa's teleportation.

"Now then, let's go Tama."
"Aye aye~"

'Pyon', Tama jumped and landed on my shoulder, she then took the pose to ride on it.
Since Tama is wearing the golden armor, it feels slightly painful.

It became a different map once we walked a bit in the forest, so I used [All Map Exploration] magic to get the details of the blank area.
Hikaru said that the shadow sentries were protecting it, but there's no one inside the castle that occupies half of the forest.
Princess Rimia and the crime guild people are stranded in front of the barrier protecting the castle.

According to Hikaru, the barrier should be dissolved if there's a royalty carrying an item called [Necklace of the Treasured Key], it seems there's some kind of problem there.

"--A fake?"
"I'm not a fake."

I could hear such conversations when we I landed on a pitch black tree branch surrounding them.
The crime guild boss is holding a pink-colored wig, Princess Rimia's hair color has changed to golden.
Looks like she doesn't have the pink hair peculiar to Rumooku royalty.

"There's no point if a royalty doesn't have colored hair! You damn fake."

The enraged crime guild boss complained unreasonably and swung his curved sword.

--Oops, that's bad.

"Utsusemi no jutsu~?"

Ninja Tama replaced the princess with a log while camouflaging it with a white smoke.
Retorting, "Isn't that [Switching] jutsu", here would be boorish of me, so I used this chance to wear Nanashi mask.

"--Who the!"
"Hello, nice to meet you. Although I think our acquaintance will be short, best regards okay."

While feeling nostalgic with Nanashi's way of talking that I haven't used for a while, I knocked down the crime guild people with the anti-personal [Remote Stun] magic.
Some screamed, some tried to ran away, and some used their friends or trees as a shield, but I gained total control in about 10 seconds.
Ninja Tama skilfully collected the torches they had before they fell.

"Are you injured anywhere?"

Even though I asked her that, the princess only keeps shivering with a pale face without answering.

"Is it painful somewhere~?"

The princess shook her head to Tama's question and asked back with a trembling voice.

"Are you shadow sentry-sama who's going to punish Rimia for entering the forest?"
"We're not."

Once she understood that she was mistaken, she looked relieved and fainted.

Well, I can't blame her.

This sheltered princess was kidnapped by these evil looking people after all.

I let the little girl to sleep nearby, asked Tama to capture the kidnappers, and then I went around to collect the horses that have dispersed in the forest.
I met Arisa and the others who are together with Princess Rumia's party when I had collected the last horse.

I've made a bonfire reclyed from the thieves' torches as a mark.

Moving differently from Arisa and the others, it seem this country's second prince and his troops are coming toward here.
Let's push the duty to take the princesses back to them.

"Rimiaaaaaa"
"Princess-chan, running is dangerous."

Princess Rumia who found Princess Rimia ran toward her while screaming loudly.
The female adventurer supported her when it looked like she was going to fall.

Behind the female adventurer, two of her friends in manned golems are following.
Judging from Hikaru's and Arisa's expressions who are accompanying them, it seems the adventurers didn't kidnap Princess Rimia.

It wouldn't be an emotional reunion if she were still unconscious, so I woke Princess Rimia with wakening magic.

"--Ane-sama?"
"Rimiaaaaaa"

Little girls who don't look different besides their hair color are crying in relief.

"Quick as always~"
"The opponents were just some common criminals after all."

Arisa talked to me while looking at the little girls.

"Isn't fine, peace is the best."

Hikaru finished with a smile while putting her hand on Arisa's head.
Right right, no incident is the best.

I looked up at the sky while confirming a luminous point moving at high speed reflected on the radar.

14-31. Water Peach Kingdom (4)

*

Satou's here. Once you're familiar with a habit, it comes out of you unconsciously. You can say that it's been optimized, but there was a time when it backfired on me when I changed my job and environment.

◇

Although I think Hikaru's flag-like line isn't the culprit, several Wyvern Riders from Rumooku Kingdom's area are coming here flying.

"Pihyororo~?"
"That sounds like a flute we've heard somewhere isn't it?"

The source of the sound seem to be the Wyvern Riders although we can't see them here because of the trees obstructing the view.

"Guaaaaa"
"Uuruuruururuu"
"Faooooooo"

I shift my glance toward the queer sounds, the tied kidnappers on the ground are writhing in agony while anguishing.
Parts of their bodies and faces are moving like different creatures, it's quite a horror.

"Uge, that seems dangerous!"
"Princess-chan, come here with your little sister! Keep a distant from these guys."

Arisa screamed, the female adventurer urged the two princesses to escape

with the adventurers.

"Hikaru! Take care of the wyverns."
"Leave it to me!"

Hikaru kicks the tree and disappears into the sky.
She should be fine with that side.

"What about Tama~?"
"I'm counting on Tama to protect Arisa and the others."
"Nin nin~"

Tama joins her hands in Ninja-style and runs to Arisa.

The kidnappers cut their binding while I was feeling grossed with the spectacle and stood up after becoming grotesque-looking.

I remember these figures.
They look like someone who has excessively taken Fiend Drugs.

The difference is the existence of the wriggling red rope-like light magic circles on their bodies--They're likely the human version of the [Red Rope Monsters] that attacked Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital.

--What a bad taste.

I'm sorry for the adventurers who are holding their sword and wands in alert, but I'll deal with this quick.
I hate splatter after all.

I invoke the advanced force magic [Magic Arm] to immobilize the kidnappers, and drain their magic power all at once with [Mana Drain Thorn].
This magic is a version of [Mana Drain] that works against many people

at once, furnished with thorn-like light that grow in all directions as a visual.
The quantity of the MP drain is less than the original but it's more than enough for these guys.

The kidnappers whose magic power have been drained become mummy-like.
It's still better than being grotesque-looking but it seems they won't go back to their original figures like the people who were addicted with Fiend Drug.

--Nn?

The luminous points of the adventurers reflected on the radar are moving toward the Shadow Castle.
Come to think of it, that female adventurer undertook the job of carrying the [Magic Creature for Intelligence Gathering] into the Shadow Castle from the weaselkin huh.
She probably took Princess Rumia to open the barrier.

"--Master!"

When I turned around to Arisa's voice, I saw Arisa and the others being pulled by countless black hands toward barrier's beyond.
I immediately used space magic [Article Pull (Abort)] to pull them back, but it was canceled in vain.

--I forgot that this was a teleportation-prohibited area.

While regretting my foolish mismanagement, I moved to the foremost black hand with Ground Shrink and helped Tama escape from it.
It seems Holy swords can easily cut the black hands but they grow back every time they're cut so Tama couldn't escape from them.

I stretched my hand toward Arisa but tsunami-like shadow hands pushed me away, she got kidnapped together with the princesses and the others to beyond the barrier.

"Barrier~?"

Tama repeatedly hits the surface of the barrier that was closed before her.
Then, Hikaru came back while dragging beastkin people who seemed to be the Wyvern Riders.

"Satou, I've defeated them--wait, what about Arisa and the others?"
"They were taken by the shadow."

Looking at the map, Arisa and the others seem to have been taken to the innermost room in the maze-like castle.

"Wait a minute, I'll use the barrier puncture magic--"
"There's no need."

I stopped Hikaru's talk midway.

--Things like barrier, I'll just tear them off.

I'm being dominated with a slightly violent thought from the impatience of losing Arisa.
While doing self-analysis like such, I throw away my restrain and extend my hand at the barrier.

--Huh?

For some reason, the barrier doesn't reject me, my hand is slipping right through it.
Tama who's still hitting the barrier is still denied of entry.

I tried to pull Tama's hand and we could enter together.

"Hikaru, let's go together. Tama, wait at the rock with the carved seal board after you've delivered these guys to the knight."
"Un, I got it."
"Tama will wait."

Hikaru agreed with my instruction, Tama nodded and talked with a stiff not-slow voice.
After patting Tama's head once to relieve her, I took Hikaru along beyond the barrier.

--Now, let's go help Arisa.

◇

"<<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais"

Hikaru uses Claiomh Solais to turn the Shadow Sentries blocking our way into dust.
I wonder if it's just my imagination, I feel that the Shadow Sentries are only attacking Hikaru since awhile ago.
Perhaps they remember about their fight with Hikaru a long time ago?

While getting distracted by that, we passed through the forest and arrived before the castle.
There's a cliff before our eyes and a pitch black castle towering over us on top of the cliff.

"They're coming again!"

Shadow Sentries are appearing one after another from the shadow of the trees and rocks.
It's like a spawn point with unlimited spawn, and even if a hundred of them appear, they're nothing but a hindrance since they're only level 30.

Furthermore, they don't exist on the map until after they've appeared which is annoying.

--<<Remote Shining Javelin>>.

Just like the name suggest, homing spears that emit intense light defeat the Shadow Sentries.
Once I, who was ignored by the sentries, defeated one of the them, they seemed to deem me as an enemy and started to attack me.

"They don't give you experience, so we'd better use『Light Net』to catch them and leave them alone!"
"Got it."

Following Hikaru's advice, I use several Light Nets to catch the pursuing sentries, stopping them.
Thanks to that, we successfully invaded the castle.

It seems Arisa and the others are in the innermost room of the castle, [Master Room], in fainted states.

I can't use teleport and Clairvoyance magic so I can only see them from the map's information.
The situation uncontrollably worries me.

"Ichirou-nii, Arisa would be fine, you shouldn't get impatient."
"Yeah, I'm just worried if Arisa would go too far."

I replied Hikaru with a light tone somehow.

Still, my mind was able to calm down somewhat from the conversation.
We quickly advance the path after thanking Hikaru.

With Arisa's current ability, she should be fine even against a demon lord, but I can't say that out loud.
Some god or great demon lord feel like they'd appear if I do that.

◇

"--Hikaru, let's stop a bit here."

I let Hikaru who's breathing roughly to rest, take out an accelerated magic gun and annihilate [Shadow Sentries] and some mixed level 50 [Shadow Knights] with [Holy Bullets].

The bullets hit the wall and got repelled while leaving sound like when you drop waterdrops at hot oil.
....Stopping holy bullets huh, that's quite a sturdy wall.

Still, on top of the increasing enemy level, their spawn rhythm has increased too.
We're just wasting time if this keeps on.

Arisa and the others are not injured for the time being, but on top of not knowing the other party's objective, there's no guarantee that they will keep being safe.
Wonder if I can make a short cut somehow?

I took out a small white knife from Storage and cut the wall with it.

--Yup, looks like it'll go well.

"■■■■■■■■ ■■ ■ ■■■....."

Next, I point a wand made of [True Silver] that has good magic accuracy diagonally toward the wall and begin to chant the forbidden spell of destruction magic [Banishing Perforation].

"Ichirou-nii, the wall here can't be broken you know. The child who came with me in the past said that it had『Non-Destructive Element』."

I lift the corner of my mouth to reply Hikaru.
We'll see the result soon.

The forbidden spell consumes magic power that equals the Meteor Shower's.
I can't afford the chance of Arisa and the others getting injured so the target's direction is the opposite of them.

"....■■■■■■■■■ Banishing Perforation."

A collapsing phenomenon from the concept of [Destruction] that can't be comprehended by the science I know is slowly destroying the wall.
Judging from the preface of the spell code, it seems to be a spell that recreates the power of dragon fang that [Penetrates all].

--Still, the control of the magic is difficult.

If I lose focus, the power of [Destruction] might even erase me as the user.
I maintain the wand that feels like it'll fly off with my physical strength, enduring until the spell ends.

The wall in front of me has been erased, and many walls beyond it are also bored through.

In the end, it seem to even reach the sky.

"Uwah, you really destroyed the wall."

Hikaru muttered in astonishment.
I drink a magic potion and calm my rough breath.

This was a test to see whether the wall could be broken with magic, but I used a white knife made from the remain of the black dragon's fang to test whether it could be broken itself.

"Now then, time for the real thing."

I use [Banishing Perforation] once again in order to create a shortcut in the maze-like corridors.

Unfortunately I couldn't pierce through the target location.
Judging from the sensation, it seems the area surrounding the [Master Room] is protected by an Anti Magic type of barrier.

"Let's go."
"Un, let's!"

Together with Hikaru, I jumped into the hole created by the [Banishing Perforation].

◇

"Tubes? Hikaru, do you know what is the facility here?"
"U~n, I didn't reach here when I came before so I don't know."

After entering the door at the end of the hole, we came into a room full of

glass tubes that looked like the ones used to create homonculus that I saw in the Royal Capital.
Among many of them, one has some kind of liquid with something floating inside.

"--But there's no mistake that this is an important facility isn't it."
"That seems to be the case."

Shadow Knights appear in every direction of the room--and they're strong at level 99 to boot.
Hikaru might get hurt if I don't fight them seriously.

--Eat this.

I cut down the Shadow Knights with the advanced light magic [Photon Laser].
I understand from the fights so far, these shadows are weak against light magic indeed.

--This is bad.

The Photon Laser that hit the wall was reflected and cut down the unexpected facilities.
Glass pieces are scattered, black sparks paint the space.

"Ichirou-nii, behind you!"

A Shadow Knight is closing in even while breaking down into dust.

I fill the holy sword Durandal I have in hand with magic power and imitate the light magic finisher that hero Hayato showed once before.

--<<Shining Blade>>.

The shock wave produced by Durandal annihilated the Shadow Knight like an ink dropped into water.

"Ichirou-nii, you overdid it!"

Glass pipes and equipment as tall as a person are breaking one after another behind Hikaru who's running toward the exit at full force.
Looks like they're broken by the after-waves of the light magic and the finisher.

The one with something floating inside is protected by Flexible Shield so it's safe. I collect the pipe into the Storage as is.
I'll check the inside after we've saved Aria and the others.

While deploying wind magic protection to evade the dust, I follow after Hikaru.

◇

"Arisa!"

After kicking a monochrome door that's as tall as a person, we came into a place that looked like a throne room.
It appears the level 75 [Great Shadow Knight] that were endlessly spawning just before aren't appearing in this throne room.

This place is filled with serene atmosphere.

And, Arisa and the princesses are sleeping on the gigantic 10-meter tall thrones on the back.
I reach it in one leap with Flash Drive and wake Arisa up with wakening magic.

"Ehehe, Satou"

The half-sleeping Arisa hugs my neck, I stop her from stealing my lips by pining her forehead.

"I'll do as many kisses as you like later, just wake up quick."
"Fue? --Eh, Master?"

Arisa who was laughing nihe nihe with half-asleep eyes woke up and got back to her sober face.
Apparently she didn't hear my statement earlier.

"I'm sorry, I've become a drag."
"It's fine as long as you're safe."

I can manage somehow as long as she didn't die.

On the other hand, I noticed that Hikaru who's under the throne seemed strange.

"Ichirou-nii, look at that!"

Hikaru points at--.

14-32. Water Peach Kingdom (5)

*

Satou's here. I think there's only a few people who can immediately draw their face without seeing a mirror or a picture. Unexpectedly enough, people tend to forget their face don't they.

◇

"Ichirou-nii, look at that!"

It seems Hikaru is pointing at the wall near the throne.
'I wanna see', so Arisa who jumped from my arm said, and then she looked at the thing Hikaru was pointing at.

--Painting?

A black-haired young man carrying a pink-haired little girl are drawn there.
He looks like a Japanese man and somehow feels familiar. He has athlete-style mustache, but it's hard to say it suits him.

"His face somehow looks familiar even though I never meet him~"
"You're right--"

Arisa tilted her head in puzzlement as she saw the picture.
I jump to Hikaru's side and ask the reason why she's surprised.

"What about that painting?"
"Eh? You really don't realize it? Look at it better!"

Hikaru pulls my arm and points at the painting like she can't believe it.

--I don't understand.

"It's how Ichirou-nii looked before!"
"I never grown that kind of mustache y'know."
"He looks exactly like you besides that part."

So Hikaru said, but does it look really like me?
My face doesn't look that strange y'know?

"His face looks somewhat lolicon-like isn't."
"Isn't that the face of a father who's adoring his children?"

Arisa's evaluation is harsh.
I said something to protect the man in the painting, perhaps it's because they're saying that it looks like me.

--Crisis perception.

A shadow overflowed from the gap of the painting.

Looks like the guardian of this room finally showed itself.

"Ichirou-nii, that shadow is dangerous. I've a really bad feeling about it."
"Agreed."

I hug Arisa and Hikaru, move onto the throne, collect the two princesses with [Magic Hand] and evacuate from between the thrones.
Nevermind Arisa, the two princesses would get hurt if I used Flash Drive normally, so I invoked two magic [Shock Absorption] and [Inertia Neutralizer] to protect them.

I dive into the hole created from the magic test-firing and jump out of the castle.

"Huu, I thought I'd die...."

Arisa who was dead tired in my arm said some dangerous remark.

"Ichirou-nii, it's coming."
"Looks like it."

I leave the two princesses to Arisa and Hikaru and look back at the castle.

Its information according to AR reading is--UNKNOWN.
It's the same reading as the [Demon God's Casted Offshots] that attacked Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital and the little girl who appeared during my fight with the Dog-Head demon lord.

--Then that is a god.

Or perhaps a god's familiar, no doubt about it.

"Hikaru, take the three along and escape to beyond the barrier wall."
"Un, got it!"
"Master, please don't overexert yourself okay."

Hikaru flies away with Arisa who said it like a worried mother.

Seeing that, the shadow lets out a suspicious roar from its crescent moon-like mouth.
It's a suspicious sound that makes your mind destabilize just from hearing it.

--LOWRWYEEEE.

>[Age of Gods Language] Skill Acquired.

The mysterious roar just now was a word huh.

I was preparing to use Break Magic since I thought it was a spell chant, it was a waste.
I quickly activate the skill since I might be able to avoid a needless battle with it.

『O scoundrel who snatched away God's brides.』
『You've mistaken them for another people. They are the princesses of Rumooku Kingdom.』
『O small one, your nonsense is useless. You are stealing girls who posses the mark that is their pink hair.』

Fumu, apparently, Rumooku myth has some truth in it.

However, I would not let some innocent little girls be sacrificed.

『Are you a God? If so, declare your name.』
『A god I am not. For I am the apostle guarding in absence of God.』
『Do pray tell of Apostle-dono's master.』

Oops, I caught on the apostle's strange way of talking.

At any rate, the [Dragon Talisman] that I've prepared as an anti-apostle countermeasure doesn't seem to be working at all.

『For it is insolent to ask the emperor name of God. For the name of the emperor who rules everything in this world is widely known in the whole world. You'd do well to worship the ally of the supreme--』

Our words can't connect, or rather I somehow feel like talking with a bad AI.

『--If that is be so, depart this world painlessly, and return anew.』

The shadow's extended arms are attacking from both side with speed so

fast it looks like a frame skip.

--Fast.

Arms which leaped with speed so fast it's creating whirlwind cut rally before my eyes.
While evading them within a hair's breadth, I tried cutting them with the holy sword Durandal I had in my hand, but as expected it went through them.
So these Unknown Series really can only be wounded with the Divine Sword.

I have a hunch that the Holy Magic Sword from back then most likely can't cut them either.
Just in case, it might be better to prepare a replacement for the Divine Sword.

The shadow is still repeating its crude baby-like attacks, but each of them is too fast, it's creating sonic boom-like shockwaves.
It's not that I can't evade them, but it's quite hard.

The shockwaves turned the trees inside the barrier into a disastrous scene. Fortunately the area outside the barrier is unaffected.
Looking at the map, Hikaru and the others have safely evacuated outside the barrier.

Now I can fight without worry.

With a speed that makes it looks like it has clone bodies, the baby's repeated blows come flying at me.
I use Flash Drive to evade those, and then jump toward the shadow's chest when I find a chance.

"Uoo"

Sharp shadow spears attacked me from the shadow's chest.
I put the Divine Sword in front of my body like a shield to block them.

I cut the shadow in front of me while scattering purple sparks.

I had let my guard down since the opponent was human-shaped.
However, I changed this predicament into a chance.

I arrive at its chest and stab the Divine Sword into it.

『Impossibleeeeee』

I ignore the shadow's scream and cut it until its head.

『You small one shouldn't have been able to cut a familiar of God.』

I evade the giant arms that are trying to stop me within a hair's breadth, and then cut the shadow's face which has a shocked mouth that only serves as an appearance.

『You....Who are you....』

It seems the Divine Sword is giving more damage than it looks like, the places that have been cut are disappearing into purple dust.

『Hero Nanashi』
『....Damn you....Parion's pawn....』

The castle is gradually disappearing into dust together with the shadow.

>[God's Soldier Silhouette] is defeated.

It's quite different than the Parion Holy State's pseudeo-god's soldier.

The reason why the Auto Loot isn't working is probably because the adventurers and the explorer probes they bring into the area.
I collect the probes I found in the area, and throw the adventurers who had wounds all over their body to outside where Hikaru and others are.
It wasn't a fatal injury, so I'll let them feel the pain to reflect on their own recklessness.

It looked like I spent too much time, most of the loot inside the castle had turned into dust along with the castle, I was only able to get the power reactor part.
It seems I'll have to wait for another chance to get the precious so-called age of gods documents.

"Wlcome~?"
"I'm back Tama."

Tama jumped to my head when I teleported outside the barrier.
I settle things while apologizing for making her worry.

I pushed the princesses to the knights, collected everyone and teleported back to the solitary island's palace.

Today is tiring.
Investigating the new mystery can be done later.

I lay my body in the bed together with the others like usual.
Is it just my imagination, I feel that there are more people than usual, but I'll check if after I wake up.

Losing to the drowsiness, I slept like a log.

◇

"Your Highness, is that it?"

The next day after we saved the princesses from the Shadow Castle, we formally visited Rumooku Kingdom with the tour ministry's airship.
After doing some greetings in the Royal Castle, I requested to take a look at the Japanese-summoning site, and since they pleasantly agreed, I immediately went to see it.

"That's right, we can't go from here due to the fissure. It's a bit troublesome but we need to go around the spire over there."

The crown prince of this country is graciously guiding us.
At first, the half sister of Princess Menea, the fourth princess was the one going to do it, but he volunteered to be the guide almost forcefully.

"Viscount Pendragon, this is the place where the Japanese were summoned. As you can see, the building has collapsed from the greater demon's attack, the magic equipment for the summoning have been broken, and more than half of the summoning magic circle is damaged."

The crown prince led us to a partially destroyed palace.
The scenery that can be seen from there is completely different than the town where we enjoyed the festival at yesterday.

The town on the opposite side of the Royal Castle is in shambles.
Burnt carbonized pillars and wreckages are piled up, crows seeking the dead flesh are eerily crawling.

Nevertheless, it seems they've started rebuilding, slaves are engaged in labor supervised by the soldiers.

"Was that done by the greater demon?"

"--That's right. If they felt like it, this country might have already been erased from the map."

The crown prince answered me while looking grim.
It's understandable seeing that there's hardly anyone strong enough to fight a demon-class enemy in this country.

"Viscount-sama, let us confirm the magic circle."

Hikaru who's acting as Lady K the guard reminded me about our original purpose.

"Ah, that's right--Your Highness, may I?"
"Of course."

We already got the permission from the king, but I checked with the crown prince who's accompanying us to show deference.

"Hm~m, so this is the magic circle used to summon people from another world..."

Hikaru muttered in a low voice.

--What is this? I can read it normally y'know?

『Hikaru, can you read this magic circle?』

I silently asked through『Telephone』, Hikaru lightly waved her head.
Apparently, only I can read it.

"The weaselkin magician was boasting how they had remodeled the transcribed summoning magic circle of the Saga Empire. Apparently, it was written in an ancient language."

Crown prince, thank you for the information.

Apparently, I'm able to read it thanks to the [Age of Gods Language] skill I got from the fight with the Silhouette of the God's Soldier.
Easy mode is nice indeed.

I can understand the content to some extent even if it's broken as long as I can read the writing.
There's probably no point to this in simple form, but I might be able to learn the way to go back home if I compare it with the hero summoning magic circle in Saga Empire.

I'm already fully planning to stay here, but I don't want to sever my connections with the people in my former world dryly, and I might use it to send Aoi and Shin back to their worlds if they wished for it.

After getting the necessary information, I saw some kind of purple thing in the gap of the wreckage.

According to the AR reading, it's a [Yuriko's Hair].
It's probably the reincarnated person, the king's little sister and the pivot of the summoning, Yuriko's hair strand.

"Viscount Pendragon, that hair is of my aunt."
"By aunt you mean--"

The crown prince holds out his hand while looking stiff toward me who's holding a purple hair strand.
After I gave him the hair, he wrapped it in a handkerchief and preciously put it in his chest.

"Due to the greater demon's magic attack, there was not even a body remaining of my aunt to mourn for. Even though she might be a great criminal to your kingdom and Saga Empire, she was our important

family.... I'd like to put at least a hair into her royal family grave."

--No body was remaining huh.

It's not unusual with ranged advanced level magic or forbidden spell, but if this were a shounen manga, she might reappear while saying, "I'm actually alive all along" or something....

Apart from that, I wonder what he meant by [great criminal]?
From the Japanese's point of view, it's inevitable for her to be called a [great criminal], but I wonder if there's a law saying [Summoning Japanese people is forbidden] in Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire?

We left Rumooku Kingdom without any particular impression perhaps due to that incoherent things distracting me.
It must be because the event in the day before left too deep of an impression.

◇

Now then, I'll confirm various things before leaving the country.

The criminals who kidnapped the sixth princess Rimia are naturally executed.
As a punishment for the fifth princess Rumia who left the Royal Capital without permission, she's prohibited from eating after-meal snacks for 10 days.
Capital punishment was also considered for the officials and soldiers who drank liquor and let the royalty to be kidnapped, but they only ended up getting whipped due to both the princesses' appeal and the lack of personnel.
I feel that it's quite a generous punishment, but it's another country's

problem so I decide not to care.

The country confiscated the firm of the suspected weaselkin, but the weaselkin who was the owner of the firm had escaped, the confiscated property of the firm was too little compared to its scale, so they concluded that it was a planned offense and the king dispatched an official protest and a messenger to the Weasel Empire.

The three adventurers seem to have fled the country along with the artifacts they safely got from the Shadow Castle.
It seems they pushed half of the artifacts to Hikaru who they mistook as their life savior.

And, the blond sixth princess Rimia is--.

"Thank you very much, Viscount-sama."
"It's nothing much. I'm only doing as His Majesty asked; to send Your Highness to the Duchy Capital."

I'm only going to help the princess who's smart beyond her age to enter the childhood school of Shiga Kingdom Royal Academy.

She should stop being conscious with her non-pink hair complex if she lives in a different place, and her big sister Princess Menea should be able to help her when she's troubled if it's in the Royal Capital.

While being careful as to not raise some little girl flag carelessly, I directed the ship to toward the Duchy Capital and solemnly drove the taxi.

We reunited with the one-armed magic hunter Kon boy when we stopped by the [Puta Town] to stock up tomato seedlings.
On top of being trained the basic by a Shiga Eight Swords, he also got a magic sword from a mysterious black-clothed person.

....Even good luck should have a limit.

As he wanted to go to the Labyrinth City, I sent him to the Duchy Capital together with Princess Rimia.
He got along with Princess Rimia in the journey, so he was probably going to be her guard until the Royal Capital.

I pushed the things after that to Toruma, so it should go well no doubt.

After that, as Nanashi, I told the King of Rumooku Kingdom that the Shadow Castle in the barrier had disappeared, and I had set it so the fixed barrier would be opened if the [Rumooku King] recite the command word.
Further, in consideration for sightseeing, I've also made it so that the stereoscopy image of the Shadow Castle can be seen outside the barrier.

Many magic tools suited for the power reactor part are too dangerous, and it seems like it'll bring unnecessary misfortunes if a small country were to posses it, so I told the king about undiscovered gold and coal pit sites instead.

People would probably stop calling it a poor country in 10 years.

14-33. Research and an Act in Daily Life

*

Satou's here. Although daily life isn't restricted to peace, I think it's important to immerse yourself in your hobby while forgetting your work once in a while. Although you have no choice but to accept if you were to fall into a carnage due to that....

◇

"Fumu, reproducing it was harder than I thought...."

I stare at the prototype [Float Core] floating in the air.

"As expected of my Satou."
"No, Tina-sama. He's our Satou."

The Princess and Sera who came to watch said some strange things behind me.
I feel like I'm seeing illusions of a tiger and a dragon on them even while they're smiling.

I'd be glad if someone said I belong to Aze-san instead.

"--By the way, Satou. Is this magic device different from aerodynamic engine?"
"Yes, it has a completely different theory--"

Since the princess asked, I taught her about the result of my research.

Aerodynamic engine's approach is by changing magic power into wind element to create buoyancy.

This Float Core is made from a high purity Darkness Stone, making use of its [Absorption] effect to suck the gravity at the place where the Float Core is situated at, showing a fantasy power.

If a physic teacher were to hear this, they would narrate a long lecture about how unscientific it is for gravity.
Further, it doesn't seem to be an anti-gravity where the directional is reversed.

The Darkness Stone which had no use besides for making a darkroom or for counterbalancing magic is in the limelight of this.

"Kyaaaa"
"Tina-sama!"

The Princess who lost to her curiosity and approached the [Float Core] seemed to have gotten too close and entered the effective range.
Sera jumped out to save the Princess who was floating in the zero gravity but she bumped against her and began to rotate wildly.
I think they'll go out of the range before long, but letting the skirts of these girls of marriageable age out in the open like this is probably bad.

I tell them, "I'm coming to help you", and then I gently catch them with [Magic Hand] and put them on the safe ground.

"--Did you see?"

The Princess asked with upturned eyes while blushing red.

"The rotation was too fast, I wasn't able to."

Of course it's a lie.

The Princess was wearing a white pant with snow crystal-like embroidery

on the side, Sera's was a close-cut G-string you wouldn't have thought she was a former priestess. Truly ni--I mean. Truly, outrageous.

The former was made from common silk, the later was made from the jade silk from the Duchy Capital.

Previously the Princess and Sera wore the standard Shiga Kingdom's drawers and breast sash, but then they got influenced by Arisa and the others once they started living in the solitary island's palace and now they're wearing modern underwear.
I think they're Echigoya Firm's items, I'll tell the firm to add garter belt in the lineup.

"Please take--the responsibility."
"Please don't worry, I didn't see it you know."

Sera who's bright red despite her light tone is saying something that's hard to judge whether it's serious or a joke.
I varnished over that lightly and took the two's hands to go the other area.

"Master~?"
"Master, nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi found and jumped to me.
Since the two are wearing the golden armor, they're probably going to play in the blue territory or the labyrinth.

"Are you going out?"
"The usual, picnic~?"
"Lulu made us bento nodesu."

When I asked, the two took out their bento from their magic bags and showed them to me.

"Meatt meat meat~ meat burger~?"
"Today it's a wonderful meat burger with hamburg steak put in between nanodesu!"

I stopped the two from opening the bundles, and then I sent them off at the blue territory gate after reminding them to wear the Scout Monocles to judge the enemy's strength.

The [Scout Monocle] is my magic tool creation that can roughly tell the enemy's strength, showing [Weak], [A bit Weak], [About Equal], [Strong], [Absolutely can't Win] in accordance to the enemy's level.
The reason why there's only a few information is because they're tuned for Pochi and Tama.
Arisa insisted it to show numerical value, but I think something easy to understand is better.

We went to the living room, Arisa and Mia had opened a thick book there.
Arisa who noticed us turned around.

"Master, Aze-tan contacted us just now. She said something about the high elves of Beriunan Clan protesting."
"Ah, that huh--"

They probably heard about how I requested only Burainan Clan, who likes researching, to analyze the building material I got from the Shadow Castle.
Since Beriunan Clan and Burainan Clan are rivals, they must have complained it to Aze-san whom they could contact directly.

Both the clans' abilities aren't different, but since I only had a few of the material on hand, I had to choose only one.
Thus, I prioritized Burainan Clan that was closer and didn't have the tendency to be impatient with result.

"I know what they want, so I'll personally go to Beriunan Forest after contacting Aze-san."
"Must be difficult to even have to go to the other continent.... Can't you just contact them?"

I probably have to personally go for this business.

◇

"Is this the specimen?"

After apologizing to Aze-san with Telephone, I came to Beriunan Clan alone.
I'm currently talking with a high elf of Beriunan Clan, Salisaize-san.

She's an intellectual girl wearing a white robe, but since her face looks exactly the same as Aze-san's, it feels very odd.
Since the high elves were created by the Creator God from nine archetypes, a lot of them have the same appearance.

There are five high elves in this Beriunan Clan, I'm amazed that they don't mistake them since two of them have the same faces.

Leaving that aside--.

"Yes, according to my analysis magic, it's a type of artificial substance composed of the force magic『Shield』and『Cube』--"
"Whoops there, please don't say some unnecessary information before I begin the inspection."

I made my analysis magic from Hikaru's hint and [All Map Exploration],

it can draw up information from the Dragon Vein to see the original material and the structure of a specific item.

I don't want to use it that much since it needs a throughput so large I can't open the Menu during the magic, on top of that, the gotten information is so minute.
Simply put, it's painful for my brain and it makes me tired.

Salisaize-san who got the material starts up the analysis device while humming.

When I was staring at the hip line of a gleeful intellectual beauty, two high elves came in from outside.

"Satou! So you were here!"
"Geez, you didn't come no matter how many times we called you, I got tired of waiting!"

I was taken by high elves who had the same faces like a twin toward the observatory deck in the top of Beriunan's World Tree.
Further, Salisaize-san who was absorbed in her experiment didn't pay any attention to me at all.

"Now, look at the artificial spirit exclusively for the void sky from your idea, the『Nautilus Three Full Burnern』!"
"Unlike the『Nautilus Two』that disappeared in the distant void sky, this time its mobility is extraordinary."

I watch the artificial spirit at the observatory deck the two guided me to.

Unlike the unbranded [Nautilus] before, the [Nautilus Three] that appeared in front of my eyes looks far apart from a real Nautilus.
If I have to say, it looks more like an Auger Shell.

"That's some great mobility."

It certainly lives up to their bragging as it has splendid acceleration and orbit adjustment capabilities.

"Isn't it, isn't it."
"Now we can win against Burainan Clan's『Vulgtmm Ai』!"

The two who are in good mood throw up their chests like children.

Burainan Clan's [Vulgtmm Ai] is an artificial spirit shaped like an eyeball, it puts more importance to long ranged attack through laser than mobility.
They said that they made it after being influenced by the laser I used to exterminate the jellyfish back then.

Since I copied the artificial spirit summoning spell of the [Nautilus Three] earlier, perhaps I should try making an artificial spirit summoning spell that has high offensive power and high mobility by combining it with the [Vulgtmm Ai] spell I heard back then.

"--Alright, we're having a match!"

Using World Phone magic, the high elves who were happy with my praise immediately challenged Burainan Clan's high elves to a match.

I guess it's inevitable for me to be the referee for the new artificial spirits match?

Well, I'm borrowing both clans' power to analyze the material after all, I'll do this much as many time as they want.

◇

"--And then, who was the winner?"
"It was a draw."

After finishing my work as the referee, I went back to the tree house in Boruenan Forest and had a talk with Aze-san and the others about the situation while having some tea.

The highly mobile Nautilus Three evaded all of the lasers, but it couldn't break through the barrage of the pulse lasers, so the match ended in a draw with both running out of gas.
It seems their next target is exploring the way to improve the fuel consumption without cutting down the spirit's ability.
I feel that the High Elves from those two clans are living a frantic life considering elves have a long life.

When I was thinking that, I felt a warm softness on my right arm.

When I look there, Aze-san is leaning on my shoulder.

"Ehehe~"

I put my head on Aze-san's head who looks overjoyed.
Lua-san who's sitting in front of us is glaring at us while looking like she'll vomit sugar, but I'm ignoring her since it's just the usual.

I move to the main issue as to why I've come here after I've replenished my Azenium supply.

"Aze-san, are you familiar with floating castle?"
"The place where Satou fought an apostle that looked like shadow recently?"
"Yes, I'm wondering if there's more of that--"

Aze-san puts her index finger on her chin, and then she probes her memory while looking up.

"U~n, I don't know."

'Tehehe' while laughing awkwardly, she muttered 'you should ask my memory in the world tree'.
Asking about legend really should be with demi-god mode Aze-san after all.

I went to the world tree with Aze-san.

"--Floating castle? Around 30.000 years ago, they started being distributed to religious countries in order to collect believers for the gods."

Aze-san who's connected to her memory in the world tree answers my question.

"The gods caused many disasters such as floods and eruptions on the ground, and the people of the floating castles were able to gain followers from the countries on the ground which were on the verge of destruction."

That's too harsh for something they orchestrated themselves.

"The few people who survived on the ground were treated like slaves by the people of floating castles, they were exploited and exhausted to the limit."

The high elves who investigated the world at that time couldn't stand the painting of hell, thus they decided to sleep in the world trees.

"I heard the first demon lord『Dog-Head Ancient King』that appeared at

that time knocked down many floating castles to the ground and sea."

Ah, so this is the reason why Dog-head was extremely contempt with priests.

"There were many that escaped from the demonic hand of the『Dog-Head Ancient King』, but they were persistently knocked down every time the『Dog Head Ancient King』was revived, the one that fell near Saga Empire capital city 2000 years ago was the last in the record."
"Is there any information about the floating castle that fell in Rumooku Kingdom?"

When I asked her, Aze-san closes her eyes to search for info.
Revolving lantern-like images of Aze-san memories are floating around.

"I referred the memories of the other high elves, but there is no record about it."

--No record.

"Most likely, it didn't crash but descended on the land by itself."
"Jet black floating castle is a characteristic of something created by the Demon God, but since it's said that 90% in the golden age were created by the Demon God, it might be hard to identify it."
"There was that much?"
"Yes, I do not know about it directly, but it is said that the Demon God agreed to make the floating castles in exchange for divinity and authority from the gods."

Fumu, so the Demon God was like a craftsman or an expert huh.
Its position is probably like the weaselkin right now.

As the result, humanity decreased sharply, and according to its subordinate, the Dog-Head, humans were even about to go extinct.

"Could I ask one last thing?"

I asked Aze-san whether the Demon God had ever lived in the floating castle.

The answer is--no.

At least, as far as the high elves know, "Gods never lived in the floating castles."

◇

"Have your lolicon awakened?!"

Arisa joyfully shouted when she saw the photograph floating in the air.

That's quite a terrible rumor.

"No. It's the photograph of a body I found on the way to help Arisa."

It's the body of a pink-haired little girl that was in a mysterious floating matter we found in the room with glass pipes before we saved Arisa.

It should be a body from more than 2000 years ago according to the story I heard from Aze-san, yet there's no degradation or damage at all.

I'm thinking of researching the preservation liquid used on the body to see if I can reproduce it.

"It might be surprisingly in a state of apparent death."
"That can't be--"

I can't exactly deny it seeing the fresh-looking dead body in the photograph.
I'll go to Head Miko-san in the Duchy Capital and see if she can be revived.

Putting her in the royal grave of Rumooku can be done after trying that.

"By the way, Master has--"

Arisa hesitated and bit her lips.

"--never time traveled before right? Like maybe you traveled to the present after mass producing pink-haired little girls in Rumooku Kingdom in the past?"
"Nope, never."

I negated Arisa's nonsense with a light tone.
What she really wanted to ask was probably about the [Painting that looked like me in the Shadow Castle].

Arisa must have wanted to ask whether my real identity is the Demon God or not.

"--You're mistaken. We simply look alike."
"Y-yes, that's it isn't it."

I pat Arisa's head who clings to me, and then I hug her to relieve her.

Arisa's worry is understandable, but based on the things I heard from Aze-san's memory, it's possible that a king who summoned me from a parallel world or perhaps his relative let him manipulate the royalty's gene to produce pink-haired children.

If you think about it normally, Demon God has no reason to do such a thing after all.

◇

--nyanyan nyanyanyan.

When Arisa who was being hugged loosened her shoulders, the alarm of the emergency terminal on the wall rang.

--nyanyan nyannyanyan.

That's--.

"--Did something happen to Tama?"

I separated from Arisa who looked up, and invoked [Telephone].
The two are in a mountain slightly away from the blue territory's city.

"Tama! What's wrong."
『In a desperate pinch~?』

With that words I moved to the blue territory with Unit Arrangement and then I opened a gate on their location.
I didn't directly pull them with Unit Arrangement since their health shown on the map is in safety zone.

"Master~?"
"I-I'm sorry nanodesu. Po-Pochi killed it nodesu."

Pochi looks up at me with her tail between her legs and flopped ears.
There's a white lesser dragon about 30 meter big that's in tatters, playing

dead near Pochi.
A lot of lesser dragons have brown or ultramarine color, so this dragon is probably an albino.

"It's Pochi's fault for not checking even though it was written don't hunt it nanodesu."
"It's awright~, Stopped it at the last moment~"

Tama pats the dejected Pochi's head.
The [Scout Monocles] I gave to the two will show [Hunting Prohibited (Don't hunt it)] when they look at dragons.
Pochi probably rushed into battle without checking it.

"Pochi used high and elixir from Master, but it won't get up nodesu."

The medicines for Pochi are probably not enough to heal the big body of a lesser dragon.

"I'll heal it real fast."

From the magic column, I pick and use the advanced water magic [<<Heal All Wounds>>].

There should be no need to use the forbidden spell [<<Heal All Dragon Well>>].
For some reason, there's a lot of spells that use dragon name among the highest water magic spells. It's strange considering I've never even seen a water dragon.

Healing water heals the dirtied scales and wounds on the lesser dragon's body.
Its torn arms and wings return to normal, but its broken horns, fangs and cut tail aren't growing back.

I regenerate these loss with magic power overcharged elixir.

"It woke up nodesu!"

The dragon looked at Pochi who raised her voice, and then it takes a surrender pose by putting its stomach upward.
It's probably really scared from the match with Pochi.

"Pochi won't attack you, so please get up nodesu."

--LYURYURYUUU?

"Pochi is satisfied since she was able to fight with all her might nanodesu."

--LYURYURYUUU.

Looks like they've mysteriously established a conversation.
Lesser dragons don't have language, so it must just be the feel.

--LYURYU.

The lesser dragon submits its neck before Pochi, and points at its head.

"You'd let Pochi rides nodesu?"
"Tama wants to ride too~?"

--LYULYU.

Pochi and Tama rides on the dragon who showed affirmation and then they fly in the sky.
The lesser dragon's title becomes [Pochi's Dragon Ride].

I thought perhaps Pochi also got [Dragon Knight] title so I checked hers,

but it was something I never expected instead.

--The title of hero is at the point between life and death.

The [No-Life King] Zen said that.

Pochi defeated a lesser dragon alone and obtained the title Hero.
I should talk to Liza, it's probably better to keep the title a secret from Pochi until she grows up a bit more.
Let's decide about that in the family meeting with Liza and Arisa.

For now, I'll make a lesser dragon's nest in the mountains of the solitary island.
I have to make sure that the infant dragon in Echigoya Firm's garden doesn't notice it.

14-34. Wyvern Kingdom (1) Road to the Dragon Shrine

*

Satou's here. Inrou was the key item in a famous historical drama, but when I was a child, I thought that the item was only something that appeared in that historical drama. I was surprised when I saw it was used to put Inkan in my grandfather's house.

◇

"--Hero is it?"
"Hee, Pochi is a hero huh."

Evening of the day Pochi defeated a lesser dragon and got the Hero title, I called Liza and Arisa to have a parent meeting.
I was thinking of calling Hikaru too, but since she said she was going to attend a banquet in Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital, I decided to tell her about it later.

"Master, does Pochi know of that fact?"
"No, I haven't talked to her yet."

I shook my head to reply Liza who asked seriously.

"Ah~, then isn't it better if we keep it a secret from her for now? Pochi is careless y'see."
"I also agree with Arisa. I'm worried if Pochi would feel conceited with the『Hero』title."

Looks like the two have the same opinion as me, thinking that there are

many demerits in telling Pochi about the title [Hero].

In the end, we decided to keep it a secret until Pochi grew up a bit and became a bit more composed.

"Come to think of it Master, what's the advantage of the『Hero』title?"
"Well, I don't really know."

I shook my head to answer Arisa's question.

"W-why?"
"I only felt『My body feels a bit lighter I think?』somehow even if I changed my title."

I answered Arisa who seemed surprised.
In truth, with my maxed parameters I wouldn't have no way of knowing even if the title changed them.

We can probably understand such a change by observing Pochi's battles.

"Hm~m, then what do you think is the condition to get the title? There are three cases, Master, Shin-kun and this time it's Pochi, so you should know it somehow right?"

--I wonder about that?

I fought a greater demon, Shin boy fought a red rope monster, and Pochi defeated a lesser dragon to get the title [Hero].
The enemies' strength are lower, higher and about the same, there's no common ground.
Shin boy and Pochi fought one-on-one battles, but in my case, I was fighting together with soldiers and magicians of the territorial army.

At the very least, my case didn't meet the condition of [Hero title is

located between the point of life and death] that Zen said.

"I can't think of a common denominator...."
"I see."

Arisa sighed disappointingly when she heard that.

I'll ask about Hero title to Hikaru and Earl Muno later.

◇

"Here come meat~?"
"Cast a net and they come biting nanodesu."

The two who're not allowed to eat meat for two days are looking at the four incoming wyverns with glints on their eyes full of appetites.
This country has early summer climate, so Tama and Pochi are wearing short-sleeved sailor uniforms.

Since Pochi fought an enemy of equal strength in the Blue territory, breaking the prohibition, she was punished by having meals with no meat.
Tama didn't particular do anything bad to get a punishment, but for the reason, "Tama didn't stop Pochi even though she's the onee-chan", she undertook the punishment together with Pochi.
Or rather, this is the first time I hear that Tama's position is as Pochi's big sister.

Further, I don't tell the two that there won't be a punishment as long as the creatures prohibited from being hunted, a lesser dragon in this case, don't die.

"You shouldn't hunt those wyverns."
"Pochi can't nanodesu?"
"Look, see them closer."

The ones coming toward our airship which has entered Silga Kingdom, also called the Wyvern Kingdom in the eastern countries, are the force of this countries, Wyvern Riders.

I lead the line of sight of Pochi who inclined her head, pointing at the knights riding on the wyverns' back.

"It's like Pochi and Lyuryu nanodesu."

She probably likened them with the lesser dragon Lyuryu who's become her dragon ride and herself.
Pochi's line of sight that are looking at the Wyvern Riders suddenly changed to feeling of camaraderie.

The riders seem to be called Red Scalekin who have red scales on the base of their necks and arms, they also have lizard-like tail. Scalekin such as Red Scalekin and Lizardfolk are the majority of people in this country.

Zena-san and Liza appeared from the lower floor, and then Liza took Tama and Pochi back inside.
It can't be helped since the beastfolk girls aren't supposed to be with us.

"Shiga Kingdom's airship! What is your purpose for coming to our country!"

The rider on a wyvern's back shouted loudly.
I replied after Zena-san who's beside me invoked [Wind Whisper].

"This is the airship of the vice minister of Shiga Kingdom's Tourism Ministry, Satou Pendragon. Our purpose is touring, we wish to have a

courtesy visit at Silga royal castle."
"--Touring?"

The expressions of the knights wearing flying helmets look perplexed, it seems they don't know the word touring.

"We accepted the matter of courtesy visit to His Majesty. We will send a herald ahead."

With a sign from a knight, one of the Wyvern Riders fluttered its wings to the direction of the royal castle.

--Hm, that's?

I saw a small shadow between the clouds in the distant.

"For your own safety, we will guide you on a safe route and also advise you to lower your altitude. At this height--"

When the knight was talking, the black shadow I found earlier broke through the clouds and gradually became bigger, it got close to the airship in a blink of an eye.

The other three Wyvern Riders besides the captain ran away since their wyverns were panicking.

"--Damn!"

It seems the captain couldn't control his wyvern too as they also escaped.

"Dragon...."
"It's a lesser dragon."

The lesser dragon spread its wings in front of the airship, making a

sudden brake.

"Satou-san, it's dangerous."

Zena-san spreads her arms and stands in front of me.
She moved like an escort would, but Zena-san's legs are trembling before the lesser dragon.

I thought she had gotten used to it since she rode Lyuryu with Pochi, but it seems the circumstance is different compared to a tamed lesser dragon (Lyuryu).

The air turbulence from the dragon's sudden braking reaches the airship.
The airship's stabilizer is doing its best to stabilize the frame, but the turbulence seems to be too much.

I invoke [Magic Arm] magic and seize the hull to stabilize the airship.
I tried to use the remaining [Magic Arm] to prevent Zena-san's skirt from getting disheveled, but since the magic's finesse is low in exchange for more power than the usual [Magic Hand], I couldn't do it well.

Zena-san was focused on the lesser dragon, and since her underwear wasn't showing, I deemed it good enough.
Just having her beautiful thighs seen is alright isn't it.

"--It's alright."

After stabilizing the airship, I clap Zena-san's shoulders to loosen her.

I've remodeled this airship with magic after we went out of Shiga Kingdom, so it won't fall behind a lesser dragon, though it will be a different story against a real dragon. Putting aside offensive power, its defensive power equals to Lulu's.

--GURWRURRRUUUU.

While groaning, the lesser dragon glares at us with a face that looks like a junior high schooler who's looking for a fight.

Unfortunately these dragons don't have language so we can't have a conversation.

"Satou, what happened--wait, isn't that a lesser dragon."

Then, Hikaru appeared.
Hikaru instantly grasped the situation and then she points her forefinger at the lesser dragon.

"You there! You shouldn't pick a fight without reason!"

Her tone is like a teacher who's scolding a kid.

--GU, GURWRUUUUU.

The lesser dragon is slightly daunted.

--Right, I wonder if the talisman made from heavenly dragon's scale would work?
I made it for the mysterious apostle's prevention, but since it didn't work at all, I tried taking it out.

--KYURWORUUUUUN.

The lesser dragon looked at me wonderingly, but then it ran away while making a voice that sounded like a scream.

My image of the heavenly dragon is that she's quite lacking, but it seems she's quite high in the dragon's hierarchy.

She'll get scared if I go there myself, so I'll make a full course from the tasty naga and ask Hikaru to deliver it to her.

After a bit, the Wyvern Riders came back and then they escorted us to Silga Kingdom's Royal Capital.

The airship is cruising with speed for use in foreign territories, so it's probably going to be nightfall when we arrive.
I'm sorry for the high-speed wyverns, but they'll have to keep us company at this slow pace.

◇

Silga Kingdom is a largish country that's twice as vast compared to all other eastern countries we've passed through so far.
Compared to Shiga Kingdom, I guess it's around 50% of Seryuu Earldom or about 10% of Muno Earldom?

According to the Tourism Ministry document, most of the territory is composed of wetlands, fishing industry such ash fish, kelp, frogs and water plants raising in the wetlands are mode predominant than agriculture.
Compared to other countries, it seems there are a lot of people who are born gifted with water magic and earth magic hereditary.
People with the former helps in the fishing industry, while people with the latter can gain a high social position compared to other element users since they can compensate the lack of material needed to build buildings in the country.

It sounds like the country would also have fuel problem, but it seems they're raising water plants that produce great amount of oil content.

Lots of frog and snake monsters are living in the wetlands, these monsters become the fodder for the strongest force of Silga Kingdom, the Wyvern Rider's wyverns.

The capital of Silga Kingdom we're heading at is located on the foot of a rigorous mountain towering over those wetlands.

Around 10 lesser dragons have settled down on the top of that mountain and they've become the objects of Silga Kingdom people's faith.
It appears there's a Dragon Shrine halfway up on the mountain which doesn't exist in other countries.

Compared to large countries, there are a lot of knights at upper level 30s in this Silga Kingdom.
Most of them are Wyvern Riders, the princes and the king seem to be parts of the knights as they dabble in military affairs.
There are four people who are past level 40 including the king and the princes.

The king isn't decided from lineage or heritage, it's said that the hero chosen by the dragon becomes the king.
Although, in actuality, the king usually comes from from five houses called the Five Scale House who have anti-dragon weapons, there's never been a case where someone from the masses becomes a king.

◇

"This place is warmer than the solitary island's palace isn't it."
"You're right, it feels more like a summer than early summer even though it's quite high in elevation."

I replied so to Liza who's partly closing her eyes toward the warm

sunlight.
Since Silga Kingdom's Royal Capital is right beside the lesser dragon's mountaintop, I've come with Liza ahead of time before the airship arrives.

Tama and Pochi also wanted to go, but since I saw a lot of meat skewers and grilled fish stalls when I checked with [Clairvoyance] beforehand, they opted to stay behind.
It must be hard to be among the meat--.

"This place is lively isn't it."

On the road that looks like the road to the shrine often seen in Kyoto, a lot of stalls are lined up on the twisting hill road that's around two meter wide, selling various handicrafts and light meals.
This road is connected to the Dragon Shrine on the side of the mountain, so it's not [Looks like] but it's actually one.

A lot of the pedestrians are of Scalekin. A lot of them are of Lizardfolk kin, Snakehead kin, Red Scale kin, Orange Scale in, Blue Scale kin. Humans and Beastfolk are also present, but they're relatively few compared to the Scalekin.

The Red Scale kin, Orange Scale kin and Blue Scale kin don't look different compared to humans other than the colorful scales on their nape of their necks and their arms, and having a tail on their lower back though, so at a glance it almost like there are a lot of humans here.

A lot of local people are wearing bold clothing with exposed stomachs and upper arms, their skirts are short and they're wearing sandals under their feet.

"Master, I feel line of sights clad with bad presences. Please don't be too far apart from me."

"You don't have to be that worried, it's alright okay."

I denied Liza's worry with a smile.
The presences she's sensing is glances clad with passion from the Lizardfolk kin men.

Apparently, Liza is an owner of considerable attractiveness according to Lizardfolk's sense of beauty.

Lots of them are glancing, but there's none who calls out to Liza.
They're probably overawed by the intimidating air from the cautious Liza.

Among the pedestrians, a Snakehead woman wearing troubadour-like clothing is reciting something with a mysterious reverberating voice in an open space to the side of the road.

"--Shariui who escapes from the suppression of the mad king Galtafut.
Led to the wetlands by the『Original Witch』whose fate is linked to men--
"

I've seen the name mad king Galtafut in Shiga Kingdom's history book, although I don't remember the detail.
A young king from about 400 years ago who was famous for oppressing demi-humans.

If I'm not mistaken, it's related to Hero Daisaku's retirement to Boruenan Forest.

"--ancient dragon, the master of the wetlands, asks Riui.『Dost thou be my sacrifice, or perhaps dost thou be a warrior who challenges me.』. Riui replies saying『We are wanderers. We seek for a place we can live in peace』--"

Ancient dragon should be a grade of dragon the likes of the black dragon

Heiron and the heavenly dragon.
There's none of such in these outskirts at least, so either the dragon has left or the story has been dramatized.

The story advanced while I was thinking such a thing, the scene where Riui the wanderer fighting the ancient dragon was next.
The fight continued for three days and nights, in the end the morning light reflected from Riui's sword at the ancient dragon created an opening, and the fight ended when the dragon's eye was gouged and he was bathed in the dragon's blood.

I probably shouldn't retort that size-wise that's impossible.
It's hard to throw away my habit to verify things scientifically.

Liza who likes tales is staring at the poet seriously like when she's listening to a picture book's recitation.

"--The ancient dragon speaks heroically while shedding blood. 『O small one who hath wounded me. I bestow thou the king's throne and this land. My followers will watch over thine descendants. However, do not ever forget. The moment a king loses his power befitting of a king and his nobility, my followers will deprive thou of thine kingship and territory』--so the ancient dragon announced, and bestowed fangs, claws and thorns to the wanderer king Riui. King Riui created arms from each of those and gave them to his close friends. This is the beginning of Silga Kingdom's Five Scale Houses as it was handed down."

The poet concludes the story, the last reverberation trails.
The audiences give down generous applauses and incessantly pour down modest money offering on the poet.

I also throw her a silver coin.
It's a money I got from the country we visited before, the timing is just right.

I waved my hand to the poet who bowed when she saw the silver coin, and then we advanced toward the Dragon Shrine.

14-35. Wyvern Kingdom (2) Meeting at the Dragon Shrine

*

Satou's here. In manga and dramas in the past, There were scenes of aunties who liked to be the matchmaker setting up marriage meetings. Companies who plan for marriage hunting parties appeared in place of such a person lately.

◇

I head toward the Dragon Shrine at the end of the road while looking at the stalls along the road to the shrine with Liza.

"Look at that Liza."
"Is this a wood carving modeled after a dragon?"
『You have some good eyes customer, nyamo.』

--nyamo? What kind of ending word is that?

I checked the lizardfolk shopkeeper since I had a bad feeling about it, but it seems the shopkeeper is just a normal person.
According to the log it's the [Red Scale Kin Language], so I probably heard it in a strange dialect because of the effect of the [Green Scale Kin Language] skill I already had.

There's no need to put points into the skill, I invoke [Translate] magic and correct the strange dialect.

"This is an ornament for the hair and scale, you put it like this, see."
"Ornaments and I don't...."

The shopkeeper showed how it was done, so I tried putting one on Liza.
Oh, it unexpectedly suits her.

"Yup, it looks good on you."
"I-if Master said so."

Liza's swinging tail reveled the delight in her mind.
I gave a copper coin to the shopkeeper as the payment.

"Oh, it's quite rare to see Shiga Kingdom's copper coin."
"Can't I use it?"
"Nope, you're very welcome since that kingdom isn't stingy with the copper. The reputation is good among the merchants outside too."

While saying so, the shopkeeper showed a rusted copper coin.
Looks like copper coins of this country have a lot of impurities.

As such, Liza and I toured the road to the shrine.
There were some stalls selling whole roasted capybara-like creatures in the rest area open space halfway through the road.
They're not sold whole roasted, but the meat is chipped and then put into wrapped black crepe.

"Liza, want to try one?"
"I'm sorry Master. I'd like to refrain from eating meat today."

Oh? It's rare for Liza to not eat meat.

"If you're not feeling well, should we go back?"
"No, it is not about that..."

Liza who looks evasive seems like she's enduring a pain.
Is she troubled with something?

"When Pochi and Tama can't eat meat during their punishment, for me to eat it in secret is...."

I see, she's being reserved for the two huh.

But when I asked her about how she ate meat normally in the dining table, she said that it was to make the two realize that it was a punishment, if Liza were to not eat meat then, the other girls would follow too and it would just look like a compulsion.
It's really like Liza, but I don't think she needs to over think that far.

"Then, let's eat something besides meat."

I said that and bought a sukombu-like things sold on a stall nearby, then I shared half to Liza.
It's quite chewy so it should suits Liza's taste.

◇

"So this is the Dragon Shrine."
"It's smaller than I thought."

In the open space before the Dragon Shrine, I look up at the shrine that looks like it's made from white concrete.
The plaster is probably made with earth magic so it looks like concrete.
It's a method of construction I saw some in the royal and duchy capitals.

The roof of the rectangular building is shaped like a dome, so it somehow looks like an astronomical observatory.

『--Dragon! M-my name is Bar-Baut of beastkin! I challenge you to a fair

fight!』

The introduction carried by the wind sounded intermittent.

Seen from behind, the owner of the voice is standing in a round-shaped arena as large as a track field.
It's surrounded by three cliffs, it seem the top of the cliffs are the napping spots of the lesser dragons.
I can't see due to the crowds, but according to the map, it seems there's a deep valley between the back of the Dragon Shrine and the round arena connected by a suspension bridge.
It seems the place beyond the valley is a prohibited ground, there's no one there besides the aforementioned beastkin man.

"That beast lad is already at his third day huh?"
"He couldn't do anything against dragon-sama, poor him."
"He's powerless and only looking for death."

The gossips around us conveyed the situation.
There were some dangerous words, but there's no need to mind it.

The jeers from the spectators flung to the man were grating, so I urged Liza to enter the Dragon Shrine.

When we entered the shrine, we came to a place directly under the dome, the ceiling was high.
A slanted ceiling on the deep is opened, we can see a part of the napping lesser dragons on the cliffs from here.
Some of the worshipers are praying while looking up at that lesser dragons.

--Rather than that.

The mural inside the dome is wonderful.

Religious painting are depicted there, similar to the one in Seryuu City's Parion Temple.

"Nobleman of foreign country, would you like to make an almsgiving."

An Orange Scalekin girl who was wearing high-exposure miko clothing called out.
Almsgiving--even though she's asking for donation for the shrine, she's bearing herself coldly without trying to flatter me.

Her atmosphere is somehow similar to Liza.

While I was thinking so, the girl kept staring calmly like a doll.
Liza called me in a quiet voice, "Master", I feel ashamed of my ill manner.

"I'm sorry. I was lost in thought."

I apologize to the miko girl and take out a small bag with 10 Saga Empire gold coins from my pocket, then I put it on the tray for almsgiving the girl is carrying.

I might come here as Satou later, so I used Saga Empire gold coins to reduce the chance of getting exposed.

"....So much."

The miko girl showed her first surprised reaction when she peeked at the glittering gold coins in the small bag.
A miko with low exposure clothing who noticed that quickly approached us.

"Oh my, what a devout you are! As a senior miko, I'll guide you from now on."

A Red Scalekin senior miko smiled with her whole face.
She has light makeup but her sweet perfume tickles my nose.

"--The one who's showing his face right now is『Shippu』-sama. He's still young so he likes to play games of tag with the kingdom's Wyvern Riders."

The senior miko who's pulling my arm explains about the lesser dragon that can be seen from the skylight.

It seems this Dragon Shrine isn't a shrine that worships the Dragon God.
The object of faith seems to be the whole dragon kin itself.

"Ah! Did you see the black tail who peeked just now? That's the oldest『Bouryu』-sama! He rarely ever nap on the ground!"

It's good that she's excited and all but her ample breasts are deforming on my arm.
It feels nice so I don't mind, but the junior miko is touching her own breasts sorrowfully, so please leave it at that.

Contrary to the carefree senior miko, I could hear rustles and armor's sounds from the direction of the Dragon Shrine's entrance.

"Oy, that--isn't that someone from the Five Scale Houses?"
"Yeah, he's probably going to do the『Dragon Challenging Ceremony』."

Intrigued by the worshipers' words the Attentive Ears skill picked up, I turn around.

There's a macho.
A big lizardkin warrior wearing luxurious armor.

He looks like a handsome man even though he has lizard face.

In fact, the lizardkin girls in the Dragon Shrine are passionately looking at the maccho warrior.

"He seems to be quite able. He's no match against Pochi and Tama, but he might be stronger than Karina-sama."

Liza muttered so when she saw the macho warrior.
There's no particular comment about his figure.

The spear in his hand is made from the horn of a lesser dragon, its superb performance is equal to Liza's magic spear Douma Mk2.
He's level 45, among the five best in the country.

"--Ho?"

The maccho warrior notices us and looks at Liza with sharp eyes.

Blazing line of sights that feel like it'll scattering sparks are exchanged.
Guess a warrior understands other warrior--.

"Girl, become my wife."

--or not.

With the macho warrior's words, shock ran through the people who are in the Dragon Shrine.

"I refuse."

Liza declined immediately, rustles and screams with different meaning than the earlier fill the Dragon Shrine.
The backbiting from the female lizardkin were particularly bad.

The macho warrior who was taken aback smiles broadly.

"--Fuhahahahaha. Interesting, I never thought there was a woman who would dump me."
"I do not intend to form a pair with someone weaker than me. Come back after you're at least able to defeat a greater demon."

Liza coldly dealt the macho warrior who was laughing happily.
Liza.... I don't think there's a man who can satisfy such an unreasonable requirement you know?

"Defeating a greater demon huh--you're really an interesting girl."

The macho warrior grins composedly.
Apparently he ignored Liza's "weaker than herself" line.

"I won't fight greater demon whose location I don't know, but I'll show you my fight with a dragon later. Watch that fight and fall for me! I'll make you ask me to be my wife yourself."

The macho warrior who boasted full of confidence went into the Dragon Shrine's depth together with a dragonewt head-miko who came for him from the deep of the shrine.

◇

"--This mural depicts the exploits of the founder king Riui-sama."

Since the other senior miko went with the macho warrior, we listened the explanation of the murals by the Orange Scalekin junior miko.

"Those six people are King Riui and the founders of the Five Scale Houses."

According to the junior miko's explanation, the weapons the founders had were Dragon Fang Spear, Dragon Horn Spear, Dragon Thorn Halberd, Twin Dragon Claw Sword, and Dragon Claw Great Sword.
The thing the macho warrior held earlier is the Dragon Horn Spear, and the current king has the Dragon Fang Spear.

"This depicts the battle against the military forces of the mad king Galtafut. The one drawn back to back with King Riui is the Saga Empire hero. This little thing drawn here is the light ship of Boruenan elf, so it's handed down."

There's a hero wearing the same blue armor Hero Hayato wore.
The holy sword shining blue light looks like something that appears in a Japanese myth.

As we were looking up at the wall and listening, we came to a mysterious drawing.

"What's this drawing?"
"That's King Riui turning into a dragon using the secret art of the『Wich of Origin』."

--A person turning into a dragon?

"A person cannot become a dragon."

Liza resolutely dismissed the junior miko.

"It's the truth. It's not only clearly written in the scriptures of the shrine, but also in the official documents of the kingdom."

The junior miko bit back even though she was daunted by Liza's words.

Certainly, races that can change their body like vampires that can create followers by shifting one part of their body into a bat or a wolf, or lycanthropes and werewolves that can turn from a human into a wolf exist in this world.

Moreover, there are also magic that can create giant creatures like the spirit magic's artificial spirit or earth magic's golem.

Human turning into dragon is something overflowing with fantasy, it's really wonderful so I'd like for it to exist.

However--unfortunately, that's impossible.

Because, even the heavenly dragon who excels in magic power and is second only to the Dragon God among the dragons uses a homonculus controlled remotely instead of [Turning into Human].
If there were a magic that can [turn a person into a dragon], the heavenly dragon who's lived for a long time would have developed a magic to [turn a dragon into a human].

The [Dragon Change] magic is probably one of the fairy-tales that the first generation king and the Dragon Shrine created with their authorities.
Even though I concluded so, no one would be happy if their belief was struck by someone's opinion, so I don't intend to say it out loud.

"I'll excuse myself."

First I should apologize to the angry junior miko whose belief was dismissed.

"Liza you shouldn't dismiss the myth of this country."
"Yes, master...."

Liza who noticed her verbal slip regained her composure.

"Miko-dono, I retract my careless remark previously."
"A-as long as you understand."

Liza apologized, the junior miko replied stoutly while trembling and looking like she'd cry.
Faith seems to be quite difficult.

◇

The one who saved us from the awkward atmosphere is the macho warrior who came out from the depth of the shrine.

His scales somehow look moist and glittering.
Even more intense screams came from the female lizardkin toward the macho warrior whose handsomeness had increased.

I wonder if there's a hot spring inside the shrine?

So I thought, but I saw that the glitters were the effect of reinforcement and defensive spells of water magic from looking at the AR reading.

It seems the miko here use water magic instead of holy magic.

"Hmph, you waited for me huh."

The macho warrior saw Liza and said satisfyingly.
Just where does that confidence come from.

"Come with me, I'll let you fall for me from a special seat--"

After telling that, the macho warrior triumphantly went out of the shrine without waiting for Liza's reply.

Due to that, he didn't see Liza shaking her head.
It seems to be an important match, it's nice that we don't need to look for seats.

"Liza, since we've been invited and all, why don't we watch?"
"Yes, leaving aside the nonsense earlier, I'm interested with the fight between a man and a dragon."

Liza assented with eyes of a warrior.
Apparently, it's still too early for Liza to dabble in love.

14-36. Wyvern Kingdom (3) Shippu the Lesser Dragon

*

Satou's here. Even though I was very much troubled with the language when I went abroad, mysteriously enough, slanders and jeers got transmitted along just fine. The hardships of a local fellow traveler who tried hard to arbitrate things feels nostalgic now.

◇

"--Dragons living on the sacred peak! Appear before me if you do not fear the Dragon Holy Spear!"

The lizardkin macho soldier shouted in the middle of the round arena.

We're watching him from the side of the valley.
Lots of people around us are cheering, the head miko and senior miko are watching attentively in front of the suspension bridge.

"Look! 『Shippu』-sama showed up!"
"『Gunjou』-sama and 『Unryu』-sama too!"
"As expected of the young master from the Five Scale house!"

The spectators are delighted to look up at the lesser dragons that peeked from their napping spot.
Unlike with the warrior we saw when we went to the Dragon Shrine earlier, it seems this time they're not ignoring his call.

"--I do not like it."

Liza muttered while looking up at the lesser dragons.
She's probably talking about the eyes of the lesser dragons that look like they're looking down.

"If you're strong, no, exactly because you're strong, your heart should also be pure."

Liza's serious words carried away by the valley wind.
Apparently Liza didn't notice that she said her thought out loud.

"I wonder if they can be fixed if they take a lesson from master...."

It seems Liza has also been influenced by Arisa's showa-ism inside.

"Oh! Here it comes!"
"It's『Shippu』-sama!"
"Young master break a leggggg!"

With the peanut gallery's shout, I shift my glance from Liza to the arena.

Big body of a lesser dragon called Shippu who's the youngest among the lesser dragons landed in the arena, shaking the ground.

--KWYSHHYEEEEERRRR.

Shippu spread its wings and let out an intimidating roar.

Responding to that, the macho warrior fills the Dragon Horn Spear with magic power.
Just like the dragon spear Heiron, strangely, weapons that use the (dragon) part won't emit blue light even if you fill them with magic power.
It's strange how magic spear that shines red looks stronger than them.

"Here I--"

The macho warrior accelerates while leaving small cloud of dust.
He plunges to near the dragon's knee using Flickering Movement, and thrusts the Dragon Horn Spear at the dragon's knee.

"--He was lured."

Liza muttered.

Right before the Dragon Horn Spear reached the dragon, it's like there's a 3D motion blur effect on the body of the dragon.
Moving like doing a roundhouse kick in ultra high speed, Shippu's tail mows down the macho warrior.

--He's going forward there huh.

Even though the macho warrior evaded the counter, he used Flickering Movement to move forward instead of back or up.
Sparks from the friction scattered on the ground where the tail passed.

On the opposite side of the cloud dust from the after waves, the macho warrior fixes his spear.
His eyes have no anxiety nor fear.

Shippu whose attack has been avoided looks vexed.
It takes a threatening posture once again and inhales greatly.

--Dragon Breath huh!

Seeing Shippu's body sign, the macho warrior stakes it all in a do-or-die.
He uses Flickering Movement once again and approaches the dragon's leg.

However, it seems Shippu doesn't intend to overlook that easily.

Stone buckshots shot by Shippu's tail assaults the planned course of the macho warrior.
The power is not much compared to an attack from the dragon itself, but he couldn't evade the mass and got flung away.
From overhead, Shippu let out its Dragon Breath toward the mortified macho warrior whose Flickering Movement was canceled.

"--Tch"

As if speaking in behalf of the macho warrior, a beastkin warrior in the spectators clicked his tongue.
Looks like he saw the tide turning in this fight too.

The macho warrior evacuates to the sky to avoid Shippu's breath.
Many spectators praised the macho warrior who successfully evaded the fiery breath touching the ground, but people who are proficient in battles understood that it was a bad move.

Of course, the one who's fighting also realizes that.

Shippu stopped its breath and attacks the macho in the air with its left claw.
The macho warrior was knocked down like a feather, but it seems he hasn't given up yet.

Purple lightning flutters from the tip of his Dragon Horn Spear.

"Eat this"

The electric shock releasing from the macho warrior's Dragon Horn Spear burns Shippu's tip of nose.

--GYWUUUN.

Shippu closes its eyes and screams.

The lesser dragons on the cliff top are sneering at Shippu who got wounded by a frail creature.
Apparently, these lesser dragons don't have manners as spectators.

Sparks gather again on the macho warrior's Dragon Horn Spear--.

However, his fight is over there.
Shippu swung its hand to the ground in desperation and hit the ground, when the macho warrior jumped he was hit by Shippu's tail as it rotated and he was flung to the cliff's wall.

The macho warrior hit the cliff's wall, creating spiderweb-shaped cracks, his body was sunk into the the cliff and stopped moving.
Without minding the macho warrior who's bleeding powerlessly, Shippu flies away from the round arena.

The macho warrior didn't let go of the Dragon Horn Spear even while lying on a puddle of blood, but he had ran out of magic power and couldn't release a lightning attack.

◇

While glancing at the lesser dragons who have begun quarreling playfully in their napping spot, the people are frantically settling the aftermath.

"Young master!"
"Run medics! Don't let young master die!"

The miko of the Dragon Shrine crosses the suspension bridge with desperate looks after they have confirmed that the fight is over.

It looked like it wouldn't have been strange for the macho warrior to have instantly died, but according to the information on the Menu's Map, he's only heavily injured, his life is not in danger.
It's probably thanks to the defensive magic of the senior miko and his tempered body.

His machoness doesn't seem to be only for show.

"As expected of young master from the Dragon Horn Spear house."
"Yea, that was splendid."
"Where? Didn't he lose."

Unlike the miko who went to the rescue, the spectators are carefree.

"You, you're an outsider right? As long as you don't die in『Dragon Challenging Ceremony』, you pass."
"Dragons-sama won't descend when it's someone who'd die easily, yet two out of three challengers usually die. Participating in the ceremony means risking your life."
"Furthermore!　Further! Young master landed a single blow on Shippu-sama."
"Yeah, it's a feat that hasn't happened for 80 years."
"He'll probably become the next king."

I see, it's probably better to keep the fact that Pochi defeated the lesser dragon Lyuryu and made it into her dragon ride a secret.
While I was thinking so, Liza who saw the match sighed deeply.

"I cannot approve of this...."

Liza shakes her head quietly.

"Master, please allow me to fight the dragons."
"Are you avenging him?"
"--avenging?"

Liza showed a rare blank expression hearing my unexpected question.

"No, master. I'd like to make the dragons who are fighting self-conceitedly because they're strong to know their places a bit...."

I see, it seems the sigh wasn't directed toward the macho warrior but the lesser dragon.

"Okay, but it'll be bad with that casual clothes."

Today Liza is wearing a blouse and short pants, on top of the light fabric with deep slit.
Of course these Liza's clothes are my handiworks, created from Orichalcum fiber and the whale's silver leather, they're stab-proof magic-made items, yet, it's a bit worrying to be used for a fight against dragons, even if they're the lesser ones.

"No, master. In the first place, the golden armor cannot block a dragon fang, and my offensive-oriented armor is only able to block a single『Dragon Breath』. There is no problem with light clothing."

It's full of problems for me as her guardian, but I'll put several defensive magic enchants on her.

And also, it's a bit late but I have her equip the [Thief God Harness] that can even deceive my AR reading.
Liza's identity should not be exposed with this. Just in case, I'll also equip one of the three set of [Thief God Harness] so I can change places with Liza if it looks like she'll be fatally wounded.

◇

"--Who's that?"
"Scalekin? A woman?"
"She looks like a lizardkin though..."

As expected of the highest class of artifact.
After the macho warrior has been carried away, Liza stands in the round arena, no one seems to be able to accurately recognize her figure.

Without minding the noisy audiences, Liza rotates her magic spear and then strikes the brunt end to the ground.

The people who have sensed that something was happening stop rustling, but the lesser dragons seem to be busy playing among themselves, they don't appear to be interested.

Liza lightly swings her magic spear.

Red glitter flowed on the magic spear for an instant, she shot a Magic Edge Cannon with a speed that normal people couldn't see--exploding near the lesser dragons.
Thunderous sound reverberates, the after waves of the magic power blow clouds of dust toward the gamboling lesser dragons.

The lesser dragon squabbling on the cliff top stopped moving, they moved their head to look down at the round arena.

"You, ones looking down at warriors from the cliff top. Fight me if you do not fear defeat. I will etch fear and remorse into you guys."

Liza's firm voice echoes in the arena.

The effect of [Provocation] skill probably rode on that voice.
The lesser dragons on top of the cliff are roaring in anger.

It seemed to be something feared by normal people, the great majority of the spectators got under [Panic] and [Frightened] states, the people who were the former scrambled to run away first thing.

If this keeps up, the after-effect of Liza and lesser dragons' match will cause the people here to evacuate and become an obstacle, so I invoke mind magic [Calm Field] to cancel the [Panic] state from the spectators.

Rustle and bustle came back to the spectators as if to shake off their trembling bodies.

"O, ooh! It's Shippu-sama."
"No, they're still coming!"

--Zudan, zudadadan.

One after another, lesser dragons are descending to the arena.

"Even Unyu-sama and Katame-sama too...."

Attentive Ears skill picked up words mixed with fear and awe.
There are now eight lesser dragons who have climbed down the cliff.

The lesser dragons lined up in the arena are coercing Liza by growling.
Although, Liza herself stands still while holding her spear without letting her guard down.

And then--.

"Bouryu-sama is spreading his wings."
"Don't tell me, Bouryu-sama who hasn't fought for 100 years will also fight!"

With explanatory-like comments from the spectators, the biggest and highest leveled lesser dragon landed in the arena with a roaring sound.

This Bouryu is level 65, it's a cut above the lesser dragons living here.
Needless to say, it's stronger than Liza who's level 62.

--GURURUWW.
--GUROROWN.
--GERURURU.

Starting from Bouryu, the lesser dragons struck Liza with coercive sounds.

"I will acknowledge your mettle to appear in the battlefield fearlessly.
Who will be the first to be etched with defeat? If you're afraid to fight one-on-one, I don't mind if you all go together at once."

Liza's provocative words make the lesser dragons' anger to reach the climax.
They shouldn't be able to converse, but it seems insult is a universal thing.

Shippu who was going to charge forward got mowed down by Bouryu's tail.

--GURUWZ.

Bouryu howled once and spread its wings, and then the other lesser dragons reluctantly went back to the cliff top.
Shippu who was looking reluctant also withdrew when an ultramarine-colored lesser dragon urged it.

"You're worthy to be my opponent. Lizardkin Liza, come."

I captured Liza's sharp profile with [Recording] magic.
While adjusting two and three takes, I check the [Recording]'s sensitivity.

While somehow feeling like a father who's enthusiastic about his daughter's athletic festival, I concentrate to shoot Liza's gallant figure in order to show it to everyone later.

Oops, I must make a contact to settle the things later.
This is likely going to make an uproar, so overdoing the preparation probably won't go to waste.

In order to ask help from a friend, I invoke the [Telephone] magic.

14-37. Wyvern Kingdom (4) Lesser Dragon Bouryu VS Liza

*

Satou's here. During school commuting, there was a friend of mine who said, "nyaon", when we met a wild cat. Even though she was usually composed, I thought she was cute when she acted defenselessly when she's against a small animal. I was shy at that time.

◇

"She moved!"
"Red light--"
"It's a magic spear!"

Without caring the shouts from spectators, Liza approaches Bouryu while drawing a red light line from the magic edge.

--Hm? She's not using Flickering Movement?

She's as fast as the macho warrior earlier so the spectators don't seem to be able to distinguish it, but Liza is only doing a normal dash.

The contour of Bouryu's body is blurring.

After confirming that Bouryu has started to attack with its tail in high speed, Liza suddenly accelerates with Flickering Movement.
Bouryu opened its eyes wide in surprise but it's already too late.

Riding on the speed accelerated from the Flickering Movement, Liza kicks Bouryu's hind leg from its defenseless side.

Looking at their masses, normally Liza should've been the one knocked away, but due to the inflation from her STR and VIT that have risen with her level, a violence scene that would make you question the law of physics happens.

With her pivoting leg depressed into the arena, Liza's kick sends Bouryu into the air.

--GYUWON.

Faster than the screaming Bouryu got blown off, it attacked with its tail following the inertia, and Liza blocked it by deploying Magic Armor on her palm.

"Ooh! Just who the..."
"Don't tell me, she's an elite from the『Dragon Valley』?"
"Apostle-sama of Dragon God huh!"

The spectators are getting excited with the unreal scene happening before their eyes.

However, Liza is having a complicated expression.

She was able to block the tail earlier not because of her Magic Armor, she noticed that it was due to my magic enchant, several mixed emotions showed up on her face.

--KWYSHHYEEEEERRRR.

Bouryu who was blown off to the cliff brushed off the rock on its body and stood up.
The distance to Liza is about 100 meters.

Bouryu takes a threatening posture and inhales greatly.
Seeing that, Liza closes the distance between them using Flickering Movement.

As if imitating the fight between Shippu and the macho warrior earlier, Bouryu used its tail to send stone buckshots toward Liza.
Shippu most likely learned its battle pattern from Bouryu.

--Liza's tail glitters red.

Magic Edge Cannon shot from Liza's tail shoot down the buckshots.
The Magic Edge Cannon whose convergence was made weak on purpose didn't thoroughly destroy the buckshots, but it accomplished its purpose of securing Liza's path.

However, yet the distance between them is unreasonable for Liza to cross before Bouryu let out the Dragon Breath.

"Arisa said this--"

Liza's tail glitters red once again.

Liza who warped to Bouryu's bosom at a speed rivaling my Ground Shrink rotates her spear and then strikes Bouryu's mouth that's leaking fire on the chin from below.

'Gouu', the Dragon Breath wasn't blown at Liza, but vainly at the empty sky, heating the air.

"--Experienced warriors in another world attack not by using Magic Edge Cannon, but by moving at ultra high speed."

....Liza, that's a story from manga (fiction).
Moreover, I don't think the fainted Bouryu can hear you y'know?

◇

It seems Bouryu was stupefied only for an instant, it turned it head and then prowled its line of sight on the surrounding looking for Liza.
However, those eyes never catch Liza.

That is because.

"Where are you looking at."

Liza's question came from above Bouryu.

--KWYSHHYEEEEERRRR.

Bouryu let out an angry roar and then it charged at Liza who was shaking her head in the air.
Bouryu opened its big mouth, the white fangs glittered.

--Dragon's fang penetrates all.

Bouryu's eyes are brimming with joy, sure of its victory.
There is no material that can resist the fang of dragons.

Thus, dragons are unrivaled.

"I'll straighten up that misconception."

Liza made a double jump in the air, escaping the dragon's jaws, jumping to an even higher place.
Bouryu's jaws that had closed once, opened again.

The thing that's reflected on the eyes of Bouryu who's still sure of its victory is--a red flower.

Nay--they're seven light spheres of Magic Edge Cannon floating around Liza's magic spear.
Their sizes are far more superior than all the magic bullets that have been shot so far.

"Funeral Flower Meteor Bullets"

Liza shouted the technique's name, and then small red bullets rain down from the seven light spheres.
The red light rain tore the firm membranes of the dragon's wings, smashed the sturdy scales, and created countless small craters on the ground.
Receiving the incessant thrashing, Bouryu could only crouch down on the ground without even being able to scream.

This is the new technique that Liza came up with after seeing Lulu's accelerated cannon.

It may look like a cruel merciless attack, but Liza is properly holding back.
If she had intended to kill the dragon, it'd have been faster to hit it with a magic edge cannon with penetration rate raised to the max when it opened its mouth.

While the dragon's fang is a dragon's greatest attack, it's also the time when they're at the most defenseless.

"O-oy, did Bouryu-sama, die?"
"Apostle-sama, so merciless...."
"That's cause she's that Dragon God's apostle-sama...."

The spectators are exchanging words mixed with fear.

It's been on my mind since earlier, they don't add [sama] to call Dragon God?

"Oh, is she going to finish him off?"
"I hope she could overlook Bouryu-sama."

As I thought, the people do love the lesser dragons here.

Liza descends to the ground and walks toward Bouryu who's playing dead.
Yes, it's [playing dead].

The instant Liza showed an opening, Bouryu's tail attacked from her blind spot.
However, Liza who was wary didn't let her guard down.

Liza's magic spear, Douma stitches Bouryu's thorned tail to the ground.

"Do something about that bloodthirst of yours if you want to make a surprise attack."

As a thanks for Liza's advice, Bouryu's fangs charge toward her.
It seems the tail earlier was a feint, this one is the real thing.

Liza separates her hand from magic spear Douma that's been pierced deeply to the ground, and strikes Bouryu's nosetip with a red lit fist of magic edge.

--GYWRUPEE.

Magic edged Liza's tail hit the side of the screaming Bouryu's face.
Crack, with that sound, Bouryu's fang breaks and wounds its mouth.

Like the boxing's dempsey roll, Liza does severe blows on both sides of Bouryu's head using Flickering Movement.
It continues on until bloodthirst and desire disappear from Bouryu.

"Close your eyes if you surrender. Or I'll play with you until you're satisfied if you wish to continue."

Liza takes out a dagger made from a heavenly dragon's scale and thrusts it in front of the Bouryu's eyes.
Bouryu heeds Liza's words, closes its eyes and plops down on the ground.

Looks like the battle has ended.

Liza kept her alert for a while and only put the dagger back into its sheath after confirming Bouryu's total surrender.

◇

"She defeated Bouryu-sama!"
"--She's a dragon beater."
"No! She's a Dragon Slayer!"

Oy oy, Bouryu is still alive y'know.

While retorting them in my mind, I talk to my friend with [Telephone].

『Hey, could you cross the mountain right about now?』
『Umu, I'm going now.』

Now then, I'll clean up several things before we leave.
I move to beside Liza using short-range teleport and heal Bouryu's wounds with magic.

--KURURUWW.

Bouryu let out happy voice, perhaps its pain receded with the healing magic.

"Congratulations, Liza."
"Thank you very much."

I praised Liza after I had treated Bouryu's wounds.
Unfortunately, unlike with Pochi, Liza didn't get [Hero] title.

Instead Liza got [Shura], [Enlightened], and [Dragon King] titles.
Since Liza's current title is [Dragon King], it'd likely create a big uproar if she were to go in public without equipping some high level recognition inhibition item.

"Master, it's the battle's spoil."

Liza submitted the Bouryu's fang she had picked up.
A lesser dragon's fang huh.... I don't really need it but leaving it here seems like it'll create problems so I guess it's better to take it with me?
I'll make something out of it as a commemoration for Liza's victory.

"Oy, that!"
"N-no way--"
"It's a true dragon-sama!"
"The master of the Black Dragon Mountain has descended!"

The people who sharply saw the black dragon Heiron made a fuss.
Black dragon Heiron who came flying decelerated, typhoon-like wind raged, and people got blown off from the wind.

Bouryu who was downed on the ground scurried away, stuck its body on

the back of the cliff, and made a face that looked like it was repeatedly chanting, "I'm a tree".
I don't know where its sweat glands are, but it's sweating all over it won't lose to a frog being glared by a snake.

The lesser dragons on the cliff top are also pretending to be rocks while holding their breath, waiting while trembling in fear until the black dragon Heiron flies away.

『Kuro! I've come to pick you up!』
『Hey, sorry for the trouble Heiron.』
『I don't mind. We're having a festival of goats and whale meat after a long while!』

I wave my hand at the black dragon Heiron who's laughing, "Kaka."
I'm thinking of leaving with the black dragon Heiron like this to befuddle the spectators with the impact.

"Guruu, gururira?"

I heard a feeble voice and turned my head toward the suspension bridge, there I saw the dragonewt head-miko trying to mimic the black dragon's sound for some reason.

"Gororoun?"

The black dragon is puzzled to see her.

『Kuro, what is this person saying?』
『Well now? Maybe she's greeting you.』
『I see--Good work on you greeting.』

Black Dragon Heiron put his face before the head miko and appreciated her.

However, the language of the dragon sounds like roars. And, it seems those roars are so frightening it can't be compared to a lesser dragon's growls.

Excluding Liza and I, everyone besides the head miko and the macho warrior has already fainted with bubbles on their mouths since awhile ago, and even the head miko who was conducting herself stoutly up until now has fainted with the dreadful roars that happened in front of her.

I hold the fainting head miko and lay her down on the ground.
The macho warrior should be able to do something about it afterward.

"Let's go Liza."
"Is it alright for me to ride on Black Dragon-sama?"
"Of course, 『right, Heiron』."
『Umu, even if it was a lesser one, you did defeat a dragon, so I'll let you ride on my back as a reward.』

I take Liza's hand and ride on black dragon Heiron's head.
We don't need to worry about being exposed since we're equipped with [Thief God Harness], so there's no problem no matter how much we stand out.

Black dragon Heiron folded his wings, kicked the ground and soared to the sky, once he reached the top, he spread his wings open.
Black dragon Heiron circled the quiet Dragon Shrine once and then he went toward the Black Dragon Mountains.

Now then, we're having a feast in the Black Dragon Mountains tonight.

It should be about time for the airship to arrive in Silga Kingdom, but they probably don't have enough margin to care about us due to the matter with Liza, so I'll let Satou doll, the princess and the others to take care of that side.

14-38. Wyvern Kingdom (5) At the Black Dragon Mountains

*

Satou's here. When you're playing computer RPGs, there are many cases where NPCs' lines change following the story progress. There were times when I wanted to retort, "Tell me that from the start!"

◇

『U-umu, as I thought, fighting Kuro is fun.』
『Yeah, it's a good way to sweat out for me too.』

When we arrived at the Black Dragon Mountains, Black Dragon Heiron said that he wanted to fight me so I made a copy of the mountains in the sub-space and performed a mock battle there.
Since Black Dragon had his breath and fangs, I'm not sure if we could call it a mock battle, but I'm unhurt and the Black Dragon himself only has some parts of his body popped out, so there's no problem.

Black Dragon's fang broke again, but I swear to the gods of heaven and earth that it wasn't on purpose.

It was because Black Dragon jumped in front of me when I shot a Magic Edge Cannon as a feint.
I'm really glad that it wasn't the guillotine type Magic Edge Cannon I usually use to secure materials.

『I've stopped your bleeding, but your fang is not growing back.』
『I don't mind, once I eat a lot of goats and whale, and sleep a lot, it'll grow back in no time.』

'Kaka', Black Dragon laughs, in fact, his fang which was broken in our last battle has grown back.
It's mysterious since he said that it'd take several years.

We went back to the safe location at end of the area where Liza was watching while we were talking like so.

"We're back Liza."
"Master--"

Huh? I had let Liza watch my fight with Black Dragon since I thought she'd be happy, but her face is stiff for some reason.
Perhaps, she didn't like the playful battle with Black Dragon?

"--Thank you very much for your teaching!"

Swoosh, Liza knelt down on the ground and began to speak earnestly.

"This Liza has burned in her mind, Master's teaching who warned me to not feel self-conceited just by defeating a lesser dragon. A fight between true strong warriors are truly terrific like that."

Liza looks at me with dreamy eyes.

Certainly, even though the lesser dragon Bouryu's and Black Dragon's levels are close, their battle prowesses are utterly far apart.

Take the breath as an example, there's a huge difference between a slow fire breath that you can evade by sight and a high-powered laser breath that can only be evaded by moving at warp-speed the moment you felt the omen.
Moreover, physical attacks unleashed by the large body of Black Dragon can change the shape of mountain terrains, and he can also shoot

composite magic freely with short chants.
I even had a hard time against the new barrage-like magic shot from Black Dragon's mouth.

"I'm sure soon Liza will become strong enough to fight Black Dragon."
"Can I really do it."
『Impossible--』

Black Dragon interrupted me before I could say "Of course" to Liza.
I had used Translation magic in order for us to converse during the journey to the Black Dragon Mountains, but as an unfortunate result, Black Dragon's words were also conveyed to Liza.

"That's not true."
『Kuro. It's impossible.』

Black Dragon denied my follow up.

『That girl's weapon cannot injure me.』

Saying so, Black Dragon picks up the magic spear in Liza's hand.
Since Black Dragon's sharp claws would have damaged the magic spear, he used light web-like magic to wrap and lift it up.

『Fumwu, it appears to be mainly made from [Origin Monster]'s materials, but this won't be able to damage my scales. It's likely going to have a hard time even damaging the surface.』

As the current Magic Spear Douma has been coated with Adamantite, I think it could somehow damage the raw scales, but since Black Dragon's scales are guarded by multiple powerful magic during a battle as expected, Liza probably won't be able to break through them even with magic edge.

--For now that is.

『The only thing that can hurt a dragon is a dragon's weapon--of course, my friend Kuro is an exception.』

I wonder about that, can't Pochi equipped with Excalibur do it?
I feel that she could if she used the scripture.

"However, I am...."

Liza who received the magic spear back muttered with downcast eyes.

『If you like that spear, you can just fuse it with my fang that has been broken today. It'll be much more stronger than being covered in some boorish magic metal. The skillful Kuro should be able to do it no?』

Black Dragon said it as if it was extremely natural.
Unfortunately, even my magic isn't such a fantastical line up.

The secret art of alchemy is capable of doing something similar to that, but it's only applicable with materials that are slightly lower ranked.

『I don't have such a handy technique really.』
『Fumu, then do it not with the present magic, you should just ask someone skillful with ancient magic. The ancient dragon granny-sama at the south continent and the Elder Trent at the east continent can do it.』

Fumu.... Someone good with magic huh.

If Aze-san is the default, then who will be the runner-up?
I could ask high elves of Biroanan and Beriunan clans but I think I'll ask the ancient dragon at the south continent who surely knows about the spell.
Even though I've looked at the south continent from the orbital satellite

I've yet to come there myself.

When I was thinking about it, a thunderous sound echoed.

『--Kuro, I'm hungry.』

So it really was Black Dragon's stomach sound.

I consented to Black Dragon who gave a nice information to strengthen Liza's spear, and then opened a gate to outside the sub-space where Lulu and the others were preparing the party.

◇

"Mayouma~?" <TLN: Uma=tasty>
『Umu, this spicy mayo is truly splendid. It's not a good match with the goats, but the whale meat is many time tastier with it!』

Tama who's sitting on Black Dragon's nose tip is biting whale meat skewers smeared with mayonnaise.

Without minding Tama, Black Dragon gulps down a ton-sized giant whale meat skewer smeared with mustard mayonnaise.

Liza who usually would have scolded Tama seemed to be tired with her fight against the lesser dragon, she had gone to sleep exhaustedly after she ate her meal vigorously as if she was replenishing her fuel.

"Deriglu sauce won't lose either nodesu!"
『Umu umu, demi-glace sauce is also sweet and tasty. This one matches goats well. Humans' flavoring really are good. Although Kuro's are certain, the dishes of the girl over there are also truly delicious.』

Pochi who was giving the whale meat to the lesser dragon Lyuryu asserted to Black Dragon, and then Black Dragon nodded his big head.

Black Dragon puts a goat warmed with his breath and covered with thick demi-glace into his mouth, chewing it satisfyingly.

--Pipiru!
--KYEWWROUUUN.

A green Infant Dragon jumped out of the gate connected to the solitary island palace.
Hikaru is riding on its back, looks like she's taking advantage of the ride.

I wave back to Hikaru who's waving at me looking carefree.

--Pipiru! Piru! Piru!

There's a jade green bird chirping proudly on top of Infant Dragon's head.

Unlike the bold Hisui, Infant Dragon is getting scared of Black Dragon, it's hiding behind my back.
Due to our size difference, it's not being hidden at all.

『Aren't you an Infant Dragon?』

--KYEWWROW?

Infant Dragon tilted its head in puzzlement to Black Dragon's question.
I thought something was strange, turned out Infant Dragon couldn't speak dragon language.

『Fumu, what are the parent dragons doing leaving a child who cannot

speak words.』

It's a remark with good sense I would never have thought coming out of the battle junkie Black Dragon.

『Alright, I'll teach you dragon magic and language. I'll temper strength befitting of a dragon and indomitable fighting spirit into you.』

Black Dragon spoke while smiling nicely to Infant Dragon.

--KYEROWN?
--Pipirurururu.

Since Infant Dragon couldn't understand the words, Hisui answered in place of it.

Even though Hisui can't speak, I feel that it can understand human and dragon language from its gestures.
Perhaps the God Bird race is an intellectual species.

◇

After we're done with the party, I take Hisui along to the Royal Capital.

Infant Dragon can probably fly back to the Royal Capital from the Black Dragon Mountains by itself, but since it's quiet impossible for Hisui who's a small bird, I bring it with me.
Hisui's owner, Princess Doris would be sad if Hisui were to be gone for several days.

--Piruru.

After releasing Hisui who looked reluctant to part way on top of Echigoya Firm's rooftop, I moved to the office room with Unit Arrangement.

"Thanks for your hard work. Eat this with everyone."
"Thank you very much."

I gave the party food in boxes to Tifaliza.
It seems she likes Lulu's cooking too, her icy beautiful face loosened for a little.

"Oh my, Kuro-sama! Welcome back!"
"I'm back Manager. I'm hearing if you have important matters to report."

I listen about the situation in the Royal Capital and the recruitment progress for immigrants in the city where I serve as the governor in Muno territory from the always high-tension Manager.

The Royal Capital is generally peaceful, but the disturbances at the western part of the continent still haven't been quelled.
Among them, it seems the Holy State Parion has been re-invaded by the neighboring countries, and lost several cities.

As for the domestic strife, it seems they've successfully captured Bishtal's Duchy Capital, and the eldest son of the capital who crowned himself as the king has ran away to the fortress city at the northern end of the territory.
Apparently, the reason why it didn't completely settled was because Duke Bistahl who had returned from the Royal Capital did many unnecessary things which held back the royal army.
It seems a not-insignificant number of refugees were fleeing to the territory under direct control of the royalty and Marquis Eluett's territory, although it wasn't as bad as Earl Lesseu's territory.

"Due to these circumstances, there were around 10 times the applicants of

the targeted 200 immigrants."

Perhaps because Manager knows that Kuro's identity was Satou, it looks like she's put some extra effort to the immigrant recruitment which should have been only an additional job.

"Still, 10 times huh, that's a lot."
"There's a rumor spreading among the commoners that Sir Pendragon is someone who's merciful and very wealthy, which might have an effect."

I see.... It can't be that the ones who spread that rumor are people of Echigoya Firm right?

"In addition, due to the increasing populace, there's a surge of jobless people in the downtown that resorted to crimes, thus the kingdom's government has asked for us to provide the downtown's people with jobs."
"I allow it."

Since Manager is capable, she's probably going to find the good balance if I just allow her to.
Echigoya Firm is currently extremely in black, so there's no problem even if some red appear.

"It appears the kingdom's government are racking their brains regarding the immigration problem too. A letter regarding that has arrived from the prime minister to Kuro-sama."

I receive a letter from Tifaliza's delicate fingers.
I open the envelope which has neat pattern and give the inside to the manager after scanning it.

"To allow the fourth and fifth large warships soon to be completed to be used in the emigration plan..."

After reading it, Manager muttered in shock.

I understand her feeling.
Normally they will never deploy newly-made warships to move commoners.

Since the king and the prime minister don't know that Nanashi and Satou are the same person, it's probably correct to assume that what they want is the accommodation of Echigoya Firm which had helped restoring the Royal Capital.

Now that I'm able to freely use magic, I could make 100 big airships easily during the journey, but it wouldn't be funny if the gods set their eyes on me if I did so, so I restrained myself.

"We will gratefully make use of them. Each one can hold around 100 people, but if we disregard the livability, it can hold three times the number."
"Th-three times?!"
"Yes, it's possible."

Contrary to Manager who stiffened hearing my suggestion, Tifaliza flatly spoke while maintaining her icy beauty.
Since Manager's worry is reasonable, I'll tell her more.

"There is no need to worry. Normally the journey will take five days but I'll shorten it to an overnight trip. There should be no problem with livability if it's just for a night."

Manager finally convinced after I explained.
I've reformed ghost towns and fields in Muno Territory, and thinned out monsters around them, so the territory can accept immigrants anytime.

Formally, Satou paid an enormous sum to Echigoya Firm to make Kuro

perform the deeds.
Although it's troublesome, some duties are unavoidable in order to smoothen these multiple life.

With engineers as the top priority, we have put several requirements for the immigrants.
Since there are foreign immigrants from the snow kingdom--Kiwolk Kingdom and such, I tell them to prioritize people who don't have prejudice against foreigners and people of different races, and also people who are engaged in primal industry like agriculture and stock-farming.

The less seeds of trouble there are, the better.

◇

I returned to the party place and then took my companions back to the solitary island palace.
I thought Infant Dragon would follow along, but since it had become quite attached to Black Dragon, I left it in the Black Dragon Mountains.
I expect it to become an excellent true dragon.

"Then I'll synchronize myself with the doll for a bit."
"Hoi! I'll guard Master's body to prevent it from being played with."

Arisa cheerfully replied me.

--No no, I completely can't trust her.

"Lulu, Mia, I'm sorry but please watch over Arisa so she won't mess with my body."
"Yes, leave it to me."
"Nn, acknowledged."

I leave it to the two and then I use a magic to synchronize myself with Satou doll in Silga Kingdom.
The magic was originally for synchronizing with a familiar, but I arranged it a little so that it can be used with the living doll, Satou doll.

『....Satou-san?』
『Yes, that's right.』

Sera sensed that it was me when I had just blinked once.
I feel that Sera's face was close when I opened my eyes, but it must have been my imagination.

『--Then, the audience with Silga King hasn't started yet?』
『Yes, it seems they're currently in a big meeting regarding the wild uproar about the [female warrior overwhelming a lesser dragon], so the audience with us, who visited in short notice, is scheduled for tomorrow.』

Even though we couldn't meet the king and the nobles, it seems there was a lavish dinner since it was a visit from a large country's high officials.
I can't use radar and map as Satou doll, so I have no way of knowing how big the meeting is.

--No wait, I've used All Map Exploration here, so I can see the information from solitary island palace.

It seems important nobles and leaders of the Five Scale Houses have gathered in the castle.
The macho warrior from before is attending too.

Fumu, it looks like they'll probe about Liza in tomorrow audience, I'll just play dumb.
She's formally in Selbira Labyrinth anyway, if I make her come out of the labyrinth tomorrow morning it'll be a good alibi, and they'll probably

regard it as a case of mistaken identity.

Furthermore, there's no problem even if the truth is exposed somehow.

『Princess, even though it's a proxy, you shouldn't wear s-such clothes in front of Satou-san.』
『Ufufu, it's a practice show for my future husband. Right, Karina-sama.』
『I-I wasn't intending to...』

From the adjourning room, Princess Shistina wearing see-through thin silk negligee on her body, Lady Karina wearing nightgown with sexier-looking breast area than usual, and Zena-san wearing simple neat pajama appeared.

--Ooh.

With my sheer willpower, I forcibly twist my line of sight from jumping into Lady Karina's breast.
Exerting my fighting spirit, I control the fight between angel and devil in my mind that's even more intense than a fight with demon lords.

『Sa-Satou-san! You've come here?』
『Yes, just now.』

I replied to Zena-san who saw through it at first sight like Sera.
Of course, that's while I'm averting my face from the beauties.

The princess and Lady Karina blushed and then they ran to the adjoining room while screaming cutely.

--Dear me, t'was a sight for sore eyes.

If silk negligee that show body lines were more popular, I feel that there won't be anymore royalty troubled with getting successors.

『Mou, oh Satou-san! Size isn't everything you know.』

Sera held my arm and whispered.
It's extremely unfortunate that Satou doll cannot transmit touch sensation.

I ended up listening to Sera's and Zena-san's impressions about this country and the situation in the castle until the two came back from the adjoining room.

As a postscript, I had to scold Arisa halfway through.

Good grief--be more moderate with your pranks okay.

14-39. Wyvern Kingdom (6) Silga Castle

*

Satou's here. There are people who slander others only from rumors without ever meeting them face-to-face. There were also times I believed in rumors, but I think most of them ended up in my impression changing "They were a surprisingly good person" when I actually met the other party directly.

◇

"Viscount Pendragon-sama, I've come to guide you."
"Thank you."

We're led by a maid to the audience chamber.

Today Lady K is not Lady Karina but Hikaru.
It's because Lady Karina would show it on her face the moment they inquired about Liza.
Zena-san and Hikaru are also easy to read but Pochi and Lady Karina are special cases...

--Oh?

There's a marker with color that's neither foe or friend on the radar.
It's the weaselkin merchant who sent the adventurers to the Shadow Castle in Rumooku Kingdom.

I open the map and check, it seems he's only nearby at level plane, he's actually far below underground--imprisoned in a prison.
It seems he's with his slaves in the prison, a rabbitkin wyvern rider and a human woman who has Item Box skill.

I don't know what they did in this country, but I'm not interested enough to see them in the prison, so I'll just ignore them.
He tried to sneak into the Shadow Castle to steal the [Float Core] and artifacts after all.

"--I'm going to the Black Dragon Mountains to look for the goddess!"

The macho warrior from yesterday jumped out of the audience chamber while shouting like that.

As he was going to collide with me, I lightly fling him away.
I'm sorry, but he'd knock down the princess and Sera behind me if I evaded him normally so there was no helping it.

Since I only threw him lightly, the macho warrior rotated in the air and landed on his feet.
That's some great athletic ability despite him wearing full body armor.

"Excuse me, are you hurt anywhere?"
"That's some skill--you, have we met somewhere?"

Looks like he doesn't remember me since I wore recognition inhibition equipment when we met yesterday.
I was wearing the normal one when we were trying various foods on the road to the shrine so I was worried, but it appears to be unfounded.

"Isn't it just your imagination?"

I won't clearly deny it.
This guy doesn't have Fathom skill, but there's a high possibility of lineage nobles having that kind of item here, the place with royal family.

"Wait! Don't you think the next king is allowed to run away!"

A good-looking red scale prince rushed out of the audience chamber, caught the macho warrior's shoulders and forcefully turned him around. He puts his face close to the macho warrior their foreheads look like they'll touch, it seems he wants to talk in secret.

"My"
"Ooh"

I heard sounds waxed with rotten smell coming from the princess and Hikaru. <TLN: wiki "Fujoshi">
I ignore the two like a gentleman would.

Since outsiders will only be a hindrance in this passionate talk between young men, I merely nod to the two and continue into the audience chamber.
I felt slightly reproachful glances from the princess and Hikaru, but our work comes first.

◇

"Shiga Kingdom's Viscount, Sir Satou Pendragon--"

A red scale knight standing beside the entrance shouts out loud.
Apparently, he's introducing people who are coming inside.

We don't have to introduce ourselves, nice.

After exchanging greetings which differ by country, we get into the main issue of the audience.

"--I see, sightseeing is a way to learn cultures and livelihood of people in

foreign countries huh."

For some reason, I had to explain the meaning of sightseeing to Silga King who seemed to be interested in it.

"Then, I will also go tour Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire after I abdicate my throne later."
"That's a wonderful thought."

It might sound like a flattery, but it's my true feeling.
The main cause of disputes are un-mutual understanding between people and countries.

I think it's a really good thing if the knowledge is spread by the top person of the country.

"By the way viscount, it seems that there's a retainer of yours, a master of spears, who have defeated the『Unfalling』-dono."
"Yes, Dame Kishresgalza is the best spear-user among my retainers."

While thinking "Here it comes" in my mind and being cautious, I boasted about Liza to the king who said it as if he was admiring her.
Since Shiga Eight Swords is a symbol of military force from a foreign country's perspective, it's kinda hard to boast Liza's victory.

"I-I thought it was just a rumor, so it was true that she defeated that incarnation of valor, Sir Julberg!"

The king stood up from the throne and shouted.
Is it really something that surprising?

If we're talking about fighting strength, I think Lady Ringrande, and hero's attendants, the warriors Rususu and Fuifi can win against Sir Julberg....

"I got the chance to have a bout with him before I assumed the throne, that person was extraordinary.... I respect Shiga Kingdom which has such a warrior serving under it, but to think a retainer, and a viscount's retainer at that, was such a warrior...."

Silga King dropped down to his throne exhaustedly.
Is he praising Liza or speaking ill of me, it's hard to tell which.

"Your Majesty, people shouldn't be measured solely by their strength. Sir Pendragon is a great person."
"Excuse my rudeness, but Viscount-sama is idolized by that exceptional virtuous Kishresgalza-dono."

Princess Shistina and Sera talked to the king while looking very proud.

This country seems to be dominated by males, there are unpleasant reactions when the two talked to the king.
I don't like the bad-mouthing rustles I can hear from here.

However, we didn't come to pick a fight, so I'll act like an adult here.

"Your Majesty, please excuse my entourages."
"I do not mind. It appears Viscount is well liked by women."

I held back the princess and Sera and apologized to the king, he let it pass with a laugh.

When the mood of the place has become relaxed, the king suddenly throws a straight ball.

"The spearswoman who defeated Bouryu-sama was Dame Kishresgalza right?"
"--What is it about?"

I was able to put an exquisite interval since I had anticipated it.
It'd be suspicious if I said it too promptly, so I had practiced with Arisa beforehand.

It somehow reminded me of the stress interviews during job hunting.

"Who is this Bouryu-sama?"
"I see, Sir Pendragon doesn't know huh. Bouryu-sama is the chief of the lesser dragons sitting on the sacred mountain, he's sort of a guardian of our country."

--Hohou?

Bouryu-kun wasn't just a wild kid huh?

"When he found a herd of Naga to the west, he brought his followers along to exterminate them, and when he heard that a Hydra appeared to the east, he merrily challenged it to a fight--our country's peace is all thanks to dragons-sama's doing."

So he's really just a wild kid....
All's good since he seems to be helpful though.

"I may look like this but I'm also a spearsman. I'd like to receive coaching from Dame Kishresgalza, would you mediate for us today?"
"I'd like to comply Silga King's wish, however--unfortunately, she is currently exploring the labyrinth in the labyrinth city Selbira."
"What, are you saying that you didn't bring a retainer excelling at fighting in a dangerous journey?"

The calm and composed Silga King is plainly surprised to hear my reply.

--Is it really that strange?

When I think about it, it is indeed strange.
I completely forgot that traveling in this world means risking your life.

Moreover, this is a trip with a relatively high risk.

When I was thinking how to explain it, sounds of bells rang in the audience chamber.

"Alarm bell--this sound, the border eh."

Attentive Ears skill picked up Silga King's muttering.
Looks like something happened in the border.

Checking the map, luminous points signifying people have gathered in the east border.
800 soldiers of this country and 1000 mix of soldiers and commoners of the neighboring country.

There are a lot of injured people among the commoners, most are about to run out of stamina.

I heard that there was a tension between the neigboring Makiwa Kingdom and Weasel Empire, but it seems the war has already started.

Then, a messenger rushed in.

"Your Majesty! Reporting in--"

I thought I should leave here, but for some reason Silga King said, "Let Sir Pendragon hear it too", detaining me.

"--1000 commoners of Makiwa Kingdom have surged in the eastern national border."

Hearing the soldier's report, the high officials and military officers in the audience chamber make a commotion.

"So the war between Makiwa Kingdom and Weasel Empire has begun at last...."
"If there are 1000 refugees, does that mean they've lost to the weaselkin?"
"How will His Majesty react."
"Even His Majesty won't be whimsical enough to take care of Makiwa Kingdom's people infamous for hating demi-humans."
"There is no reason to lend a hand to people who despise anyone besides humans."

On the other hand, Silga King's expression doesn't change.
It seems he had expected this situation. "Quiet!", with a thundering voice, he urges the messenger to continue.

"So, what do they want?"
"Someone claiming to be the representative of the commoners said that they wanted to emigrate to Shiga Kingdom, thus they wished to pass through our country."

That's quite rash.
Going to Shiga Kingdom by walking on foot is already hard enough, I think it's impossible for them to go through the monster dominions located between Silga Kingdom and Shiga Kingdom.

I peek at the Tourism Ministry book in the storage, it seems it's possible for a vice minister to accept immigration.
However, the one who accepted them has to act as their guardian, securing their livelihood and employment.

"Sir Pendragon, you are famous for your profound mercifulness. If you wish to save your kind, I will not hesitate to allow them pass through our

country."

Fumu, I don't mind saving people in trouble, but the words [hating demi-humans] I heard from one of the officials bother me.
I don't want to bring seeds of trouble to Muno Territory.

On the other hand, I'm also reluctant to leave them all to another territory.
Perhaps I can exchange them with demi-humans in Seryuu territory as a solution?

"Satou, I'm against it."
"Satou-san, please give mercy to people with no place to go."

Princess Shistina is against it, Sera is in favor.
I look at the two people who are acting as the guards.

Hikaru's eyes are fully expecting to help them, Zena-san too, is having a complicated expression that looks like it's saying, "I'd like to help them if possible."

"--Humans sure are troublesome. Just save them if they're your kind no?"

The macho warrior advised me who was hesitating.
Being simple is nice.

"I cannot answer immediately. I'd like to talk to them once if possible, would you allow?"
"Very well, I give you the permission."
"Then I'll escort him to the border."

The macho warrior suggested so to me who got the permission from the king.
For some reason the prince is also going to tag along too.

Rather than securing my safety, it's probably to prevent the macho warrior from running away.

"A wyvern can only take two people. Choose one of viscount's entourages."

I've ridden on a lesser dragon and Black Dragon, but this is my first time with a wyvern.

Now then, whom should I choose.
As Hikaru is to guard Princess Shistina who's against this, between Sera and Zena-san--I'll go with Sera.

She should be able to openly heal the troubled refugees with her holy magic.

◇

"I can see 'em!"

I can't see due to the macho warrior's body obstructing, so I lean my body slightly and look below.
There's a [Great Wall of China]-like wall constructed in the national border, refugees have gathered on the road in front of the checking station.

I should be able to hear them through the wind.

"Could you circle once above them?"
"--Hahn? Sure, but it won't be funny if we're sniped. Are you fine at an altitude outside arrow reach?"

"Yes, please."

The moment the macho warrior took the wyvern out of the border, I executed All Map Exploration.
Now I don't have to worry about surprise attacks from the other side of the border.

--This is bad.

I've expected that there would be people with [Inciting] and [Brainwashing] skills among the refugees, but I didn't expect that there would be one with [Unknown Skill].
Since the person is in the back of the refugees, I'll put a marker now and get in touch later.

I think the person is a reincarnated person judging from the name, Kei, but the hidden titles, [Believer of Zaikuon] and [Fake Apostle] are intriguing.
This person must be the [Apostle] from the [Salt Pillar] incidents right?

14-40. Wyvern Kingdom (7) Turmoil at the Checking Station

*

Satou's here. Fortunately, I've never had to ask myself whether I should desert my country or not. If it were just school or workplace though, I think you should leave before you even had to ask if it was worth your life.

◇

"We, demand, pass through, checking station."
"Demi-humans, tyranny, unforgivable."
"Checking station, barrier, immediately, open."

We heard such angry voices as we arrived at the landing spot for wyverns on the multistoried building of the checking station.
It sounds like the choral chanting in the movie about student movements I saw in the past.

My motivation drops somehow or other.
I feel like leaving them and going back, but I can't do that since Sera is with me.

We saw mothers holding their babies and children when when were looking from the sky after all.

"--How cruel."

I turn my line of sight hearing Sera's criticism.

I saw Lizardkin and Orange Scalekin soldiers shooting arrows at the people who are trying to cross the border wall and putting their feet on the wetlands.
I could understand her reaction if they were laughing at the fleeing people, but the truth is a bit different.

According to Attentive Ears skill--.

"You didn't hit them right?"
"Of course. What's the point of threatening them away from the bottomless swamp of the wetlands if I hit them."
"Hahn, you trying to speak some intelligent words. Oy, there too."
"Again huh.... Won't they become obedient if we let one get swallowed by the bottomless swamp?"
"Don't even joke 'bout it. That's going to haunt our dream."
"Right."

--Such conversations happened.

When I told that to Sera, she felt ashamed with her remark earlier, but I supported her saying that it was only natural she misunderstood since she couldn't hear them.

◇

"Y-your Highness! And even young master of Dragon Horn House!"

An official in charge of the checking station rushed in from the station building and greeted the prince and Macho Warrior.
He looks like a petty official who's flattering nobles, but judging from his glittering eyes, it seems he's genuinely a fan of the two.
This is a country who respects strong men isn't it.

"Captain! This is bad! Those guys!"

A soldier who was keeping watch on top of the wall shouted.
He has stopped looking idle.

Macho Warrior and the prince dashed and the official followed after, so I and Sera also go with them.
The spiral case that connects to the wall smells of mold, it's stickied with moss and mud.

"--Hear us, frog eaters!"

Human men are on the bridge connecting the border to the checking station with drawn swords.
In addition to former soldiers of Makiwa Kingdom and members of crime guild, there's even a high level warrior with unknown affiliation. The men are all in [Incited] state.

There's none of the agent provocateurs among them.
They're still dispersed in the refugees.

These agent provocateurs belong to a mysterious group called [Cannibal Snake].
I've never heard of them during my journey, and this group doesn't exist in the countries I know.
Despite being a crime guild, skill compositions of the members don't lose to professional spies. They're probably special agents specialized in illegal activities of some country somewhere.

If the men speaking in unison earlier were like the demonstrators influenced by student movement, then these guys are probably the professional terrorist ones.
Every member has Murder offense, the high leveled warrior even has

[Homicidal Maniac] title.

They've pointed their swords to three lizardkin people who are tied with ropes.
According to AR reading, the three of them are commoners of Silga Kingdom. It seems they're fishermen of a small village to the south.

"Open the station if you value these guys' life. Their limbs will be cut off every time the sand falls down in this hourglass."

The lizardkin hostages screamed hearing the cruel words of the men's leader.

"--Shut up."

With the leader's sign, the high level warrior cuts off a lizardkin's tail with his sword.
The bridge is turning red every time the tail squirms.

"Unforgivable--"

Macho Warrior who saw that brutality jumped down the multistoried building.
With his level, he's probably fine at only this height.

"That idiotic fool, he done and got himself worked up from such an obvious provocation."

The prince who disparaged the macho warrior with downtown language unfitting of a royalty jumped down while looking like it couldn't be helped.
They're quite a good pair.

"Satou-san, let us go too."

Sera said with shaking voices.
She's been quiet since awhile ago, apparently she's shaken with anger.

Her dignified face with raised eyebrows looks quite cool.

I'm bothered with the movement of the markers on the map, but she's probably safer beside me than me leaving her.
I know the agents' positions, but there's a possibility that there might be brainwashed people in the checking station.

I carry Sera in my arms and then follow after the two.

◇

"I-If you come any closer--"

Macho Warrior got close to the men before they could threaten him.

The spear thrust by Macho Warrior was somehow blocked by the high level warrior's shield.

"--Tsk, you're good."
"You won't pass through."
"Oh I will--"

Macho warrior's spear was a decoy, he pulled the warrior's pivot leg with his tail.

"Y-you coward."
"Coming from someone taking hostages."

The prince who caught up with Macho Warrior thrust his spear while saying so.
The warrior's shield seems to be a magic item, but it's out of its league this time.

"I-Impossible...."
"Repent in human hell. Your friends will follow soon."

The prince's Dragon Fang Spear which pierced through the shield stabbed the warrior's heart.
As I thought, the prince's Dragon Fang Spear has higher piercing power than Macho Warrior's Dragon Horn Spear.

The refugees who are surrounding us from a distance scream.

Looks like Macho Warrior has begun stabbing the other terrorists.
The people here really are merciless against their enemy.

I'm not good with violent scenes, so I'd like to refrain from seeing such things.

"Don't kill them all! Leave some for interrogation later."
"Tsk, can't be helped."

Receiving the prince's order, Macho Warrior knocked down two of the men.
They're not dead indeed, but their limbs are turned to odd directions.
Their ribs seem to be broken too.

As we caught up, we didn't join the battle and went to the lizardkin hostages instead.

Besides the cut tail, they also have some injuries from beating, so I'll let Sera take care of that, while I pick the squirming tail on the ground.

The lizard's tail was cut, but once I sticked it to the wound and let the man drink mid magic potion, it got attached back.

He can probably move it again after getting some rehabilitation.

"--You murderer!"

One of the agents mixed among the refugees threw a stone while shouting.

He probably used [Inciting] skill at the same time.
I remember the odd sense of having my mind getting hazy.

I check the bracelet magic tool I've made myself.
This is a magic tool intended to be a simple version of Raka, it has automatic self-defense against mental interference, and automatically recovers when you're attacked with paralyze, stun or any kind of debuff.
It cannot speak, but it has preset to distinguish them and automatically deal with them even without the user's input.
In addition, it can also defend against physical and magic attacks, but unfortunately it can be broken by a single mid level magic from me.
It's still possible to improve on that section.

"Revenge for our countrymen!"
"Make the frog eaters bathe in blood!"
"Blood for blood!"

It seems there are refugees who are cooperating with the agents, unreasonable abuses and stone-throwing come from the location where the agents can't be found.
Even though they were the one who did the harm first, they act like the victims now.

"Hmph, what can such pebbles do."

Macho Warrior smiles ferociously, then he swings his spear like a fan to fling back the stones, slightly later, the prince invokes [Air Shield] magic to repel the stones back to the crowd.

Some stones also come flying toward us, so I use mid level force magic [Defense Wall II] to create a transparent dome shaped barrier.
Unlike the lower force magic [Defense Wall], you can go in and out of this freely.

With a bwoosh sound, the prince's [Air Shield] had been broken.

"Tsk, a magician huh--"

The prince's loathing was interrupted by a stone that hit his forehead.
It seems he has taken his helmet off after meeting the checking station's official.

"I'll crush you damn small frieeeeeeeeeees!"

The prince who's bleeding on his forehead shouted in rage.

With that wrath, the crowd's state changed from [Enraged] to [Panic].
Apparently, his shout earlier was added with [Coercion] skill.

The crowd begin to run away from the prince one after another.

"Uwaaaaaah, we'll be killeeeeeed."
"Run! We'll get eaten from the head!"
"My child isn't here, where is my childdddd."

The panicked male refugees run while kicking down the frail old people and women.

I make an effort to save the weak as much as possible using [Magic Hand].
Unlike the criminals earlier, I can't let ordinary women and children get hurt even though they have the same ideology.

As expected I couldn't save all 1000 people, people who got their bone fractured and injured appeared one after another.

"--Don't think I'll let you run!"

It seems the prince intends to pursue them.

"I'll crush the left side. You do the right side."
"O-ou."

Macho Warrior seemed to be taken aback by the prince's angry look.
I don't intend to watch a mass slaughter, so I need to act now.

"Please calm down."

I come out of the checking station and whack the prince's head with a long wand I've taken from my bag.

"What are you doing!"
"I canceled your abnormal status with magic. It seems there's someone who can use incitement magic over there."

I told the turning prince while checking that his [Enraged] state had returned to blank.
I used mind magic [Cool Down] since his magic armor would have been broken if I used the usual Break Magic.

Macho Warrior's state had already restored when he was taken aback by the prince's action.

It's probably because simple mind is easy to get abnormal status, but in turn it's also easy to be restored from one.

"--■ Erase Evil Effect"

Glittering light emitted from Sera rain down upon the refugees.

Sera's advanced level holy magic removed abnormal status of the refugees.
This magic doesn't last long even though its effect is immediate, so I use mind magic's [Calm Field] to prevent them from getting incited again.

Since the refugees are spread far and wide, I expand the effective range by stretching it thin.
The effectiveness slightly decreases, but it should be enough to lower the success rate of the incitement.
Advanced magic could probably protect them easily, but since there were many frail people among the refugees, I didn't use high powered magic which would have big burden on their bodies.

With this, I've stopped the refugees from rioting and prevented the agents' secret maneuver.

Arresting the agents and their cooperators will be for later.
That is because--.

I see a priest in white clothing walking toward here from the wasteland that has quieted down from Sera's magic.

--It seems the next one is the fake apostle.

14-41. Wyvern Kingdom (8) The Fake Apostle

*

Satou's here. I feel that I become unusually temperamental when I'm tired. Even though I know that it'll get better if I take a warm bath and enough sleep, it's hard to attain such luxurious chances.

◇

A priest with white robe walks toward us in the open space which has been quieted down by Sera's magic. It's the fake apostle.
I cannot see the fake apostle's visage since their hood covers until the nose. The long hair spilling from the hood is blue colored.

--Is the fake apostle not a reincarnated person?

The fake apostle doesn't use healing magic at the injured people even while looking at them sorrowfully.

The fake apostle stops about 10 meter before us.
I think they want to be outside the range, but it's already within the range of Macho Warrior and the prince who have Flickering Movement.
<TLN: 'They' as in gender neutral they as it is on the raw.>

"--You're hurting soldiers and commoners."

The fake apostle said in shaking anger with a slightly husky voice.

Still angry even after getting the [Erase Evil Effect] and [Calm Field] huh, it seems the fake apostle needs more calcium.

"Huuh? Who the hell are you?"
"Be careful, he might have some plans."

Macho Warrior who heard the fake apostle's muttering scowled, the prince warned him while holding the Dragon Fang Spear.
Looks like the prince has regained his composure with Sera's magic earlier.
I'm glad that he's returned to his intellectual staff officer-type character.

"Military that doesn't perform civilian control is merely a violent organization."

The fake apostle arrogantly said words that sounded like some superficial knowledge.

I think civilian control is no different from violence.
Moreover, does this world even have the concept of civilian control?

Somehow, I have a bad feeling that we can't have a talk, let alone persuading the fake apostle.

"A mere violent organization is the same as Yakuza--"

The pair of eyes inside the hood are shining purple.

"Oy, I've a bad hunch."
"Are you telling the truth? Your hunch is something that can't be disregarded."

Macho Warrior muttered, the prince looked sour.

"Become salt with my『Infinite Salt Maker』!"

--Oy oy.

I reacted late since I was distracted with the skill's name which sounded familiar.

White fog sprout out from below the fake apostle's feet that are shining purple painting the surrounding white.
The white Tsunami swallows weeds, bushes, and rocks while leaving white objects behind it--they're probably things that have turned into salt.

Apparently it's a skill that turn anything, regardless if it's organic or inorganic, into salt.
According to AR reading, the fake apostle's MP has decreased, so it's probably a type of skill that consumes MP.

"This is baad."
"We're withdrawing--Sir Pendragon too, quick!"

Macho Warrior and the prince quickly made the strategic decision of retreating.
The speed of salt-turning wave is accelerating, but they should be able to evade it with their physical ability.

"--Tei."

I took out a small palm wood chip and threw it at the fake apostle's face.
Of course I perfectly held back.
With a thud, the fake apostle's face was hit and they fainted.

The salt wave isn't stopping even after I've defeated the fake apostle.

".... ■■■ Divine Light Wall"

Sera invoked an advanced level magic, a glittering light wall appeared.
The salt wave that touches the wall scatter into light purple and blue sparks.

It seems she has [Chant Shortening] like her older sister, Lady Ringrande, her magic invocation is faster than I thought.

Even Arisa was surprised to see her learning advanced level magic of both [Holy Magic: Tenion Belief] and [Light Magic] despite being level 43.
The experiment to see whether skill given through [Gift Orb] could level up appears to be a success.

◇

I thoroughly drain the fake apostle's MP with [Mana Drain].
In addition, I tied the fake apostle with [Thorn Foot] rope to prevent MP recovery.

"Viscount-sama, are you alright?"
"Yes, I'm okay."

Soldiers came running out of the checking station.
It seems Macho Warrior and the prince are staying in the station.

"Satou-san, I'd like to treat the injured people, may I?"

I check the positions of the agents on the map.
Other than the wounded one who got left behind, the agents have split into three groups in different locations with a pair in each group.

"Yes, no problem."

I consented Sera's request and asked the captain to guard her.
I also asked the soldiers to watch over the fake apostle.

Using nature's call as an excuse, I walk to a bush alone.
There's something that needs to be taken care of before interrogating the fake apostle.

"--Tama."
"You called~?"

Bounce, ninja Tama in pink hood appeared from my shadow below.
I was just muttering alone, 'I'll call Tama with Unit Arrangement', but she appeared by herself instead....

Apparently Tama's Ninjutsu can do the same thing as shadow magic's [Shadow Portal].

I squat down in the bush and display a map with [Illusion] magic in front of Tama.

"This is our location, these ones over there with the red points are the suspects."
"Aye aye sir~"

I was still in the middle of my explanation, but Tama dived into the shadow and then screams occurred from among the refugees.

"Viscount-sama! Something seems to be happening over there."
"It's fine, it's just one of my subordinates."

I replied 'it's okay' to the soldier who call out from the opposite side of the bush.
It seems ninja Tama's acts ended before long, she jumped out of the shadow with five agents wrapped in bamboo mat.

Everyone is unconscious, maybe because they were being carried inside the shadow space.

"Secured bad people~?"
"Thank you Tama. Do you have any request for the dinner?"
"Yess, hambuurg~?"
"Alright. We're having a hamburg steak full course today."

After I said that, Tama disappeared into the shadow after happily dancing the [Rejoicing Dance] secret version.

"Th-these guys are?"
"The ringleaders of this case."

I drag one of the agents back, while leaving the rest for the soldiers to carry.

The captain asked how I caught them, but I answered, "It's a secret."
They must have interpreted that there were Shiga Kingdom's secret agents lurking.

◇

"--Did I lose?"

The fake apostle seems to have woken up.

"This is a rope that absorbs magic power right?"

I affirm the fake apostle's question.
Since the soldiers are currently busy dealing with the agents and the male refugees, it's only Sera and me who are in front of the fake apostle.

The refugees who had been treated went back to their location.

"Why were you trying to kill the prince and me?"
"P-prince?"

I crouched down in front of the fake apostle and inquired about the reason.

The fake apostle who realized that they were trying to harm a royalty is panicking noticeably.
Looks like they're unexpectedly someone of lower middle class.

"In-injuring the populace, they can die out for all I care."

Apparently, they decided not to hear it and continue the talk.

"Those people were the ones who kidnapped Silga Kingdom's people and injured the hostages. The prince and his friend only helped their citizens and punished the criminals."
"H-however--th-there shouldn't be any need to kill them."

The fake apostle made a forced excuse to Sera's sound argument.
It seems the fake apostle is poor at debating.

Apparently, they didn't have any ulterior motive, they just jumped out without thinking when they saw militant men killing commoners.
Even if they have Unique Skills, I can't believe they survive this long with such a simplistic thinking.

"Those lizards were clearly stronger than humans."
"Therefore, they should catch the criminals who harmed their citizens without killing them?"
"Th-that's right!"

--Un? The fake apostle said some subtle racial discrimination just now.

The fake apostle agreed to Sera without noticing her cold tone, maybe because Sera looked like she was listening to them.
Sera is kind to the weak, but as a descendant of a Duke house, she's strict to people who disturb order.

"What's the point in that?"
"P-point?"

Sera continued talking to the confused fake apostle.

"Do you know what would happen if they were arrested alive?"

Sera pauses, the fake apostle doesn't speak back.

"Bandits who surrender will end up becoming crime slaves and be forced to work in manual labors, they rarely get executed."
"Th-that's right!"

Sera shuts up the fake apostle who reflexively spoke during her speech with a cold glance.
Sera has completely taken the pace.

"That is only the case if the bandits injured a commoner."
"Just what are? ....Ah."

Apparently, the fake apostle realized what Sera wanted to say.

"People who meant harm toward royalty won't end up just by getting executed. Their whole families will be executed for the crime of treason. In this case, it probably would have applied to the refugees."

Sera might have slightly exaggerated it, but getting all the members

executed is a possible discretion of the king.
If I had to say, the stone-throwing at that time would have likely be viewed as a problem, but we can just throw the whole responsibility to the mysterious group [Cannibal Snake] that was the heart of the problem.

"P-people--"

Purple ripples develop on the fake apostle's body.

Oops, please don't rampage in this place.
I could do something about it even if it was a demon lordfication, but I'd like to refrain doing that in a place with this many witnesses.

"--People aren't segmented by class!"

The fake apostle who turned the Thorn Foot rope into salt stood up while saying so.
Objects that have been turned into salt drop down below the fake apostle.

The whirling salt crystals are reflecting the sunlight, glittering.

The too slender upper half of the body is hidden by the flowing purple hair, the lower half of the body is covered by the whirling salt smoke.
I took out a sample of mass-produced mantle from my bag and threw it to the fake apostle.

"--Wear your clothes, you exhibitionist."

It's a naked body of a beautiful girl who will likely drive a certain group of enthusiasts wild, but since it's out of my preferred range, I don't feel happy seeing that.
I'll gladly appreciate it if it's in five years time.

『Wha, who's an exhibitionist--ueee』

The fake apostle who finally noticed her situation holds her body and crouches down.
She hides herself in the mantle I gave while turnig bright red.
It looks like she was really flustered, she said the last line in Japanese.

Apparently she failed to control her skill well when she was cutting the rope, her wig and clothes turned into salt too.

I look at the fake apostle who's a reincarnated person, agents of a mysterious group, and the refugees who have humans supremacy doctrine, in turns.
Let me see, what will be a good middle ground.

I'd like to settle this and quickly get back to the pleasure trip.

14-42. Wyvern Kingdom (9) Cleaning-up

*

Satou's here. Terrorism is woeful and violent. Terrorism that aims at people behind the military instead the military itself is a big problem in the modern society. And even in another world--.

◇

"I forbid you from using skills, including Unique Skills."

I used [Geass] skill at the fake apostle who was glaring at me spitefully to nip the trouble in the bud.

The ornamental mantle of noble clothes is too small to hide her body so she's been fidgeting restlessly since awhile ago.
Looks like she even didn't pay attention to the fact that she got [Geass]ed.

『....Lewd』

I take a big shirt from my bag and drop it on the complaining fake apostle's head.

"Behave yourself for a bit."
『Don't look at me you pervert.』

She somehow feels like my little sister when she was in her rebellious phase.

I avert my gaze from the fake apostle who's having a hard time wearing the shirt to hide her body, and entrust the rest to Sera whose smile looks scary.

Her Japanese wording seems childish somewhat.
Did she have any reason to use masculine language?

The prince and Macho Warrior came here when I was thinking such.
Looks like they had sensed that the situation was under control.

"Sir Pendragon, I know that humans are in heat all year round, but understand the time and place."
"Really. If you want to strip and assault your captive, at least do it in that bush over there."

Apparently, the people of the checking station think that I stripped the fake apostle's clothes.

The soldiers look awkward, the women and children among the refugees are looking frightened.
Only the prostitute-like women among the refugees emphasize their breasts, trying to appeal to me. Very shrewd.

"It's a misunderstanding. The tool she had got out of control and turned her own clothes to salt. There's no danger anymore since the tool has been destroyed."

I took out a broken tool from my breast pocket.
Of course it's just a [looks legit] item that has nothing to do with the fake apostle.

If I'm not mistaken it's the failed creation of Echigoya Firm's Prof. Jahad who tried to make [A magic tool to mutually create magic power and electric power] is it?
Since he was obsessed with subjects that involved rotation, he had been immersing himself in that theme after completing the new aerodynamic engine model.
When I visited Echigoya Firm not too long ago, the Japanese Aoi boy who

was working as the Prof's assistant grumbled that he didn't have time to do his own research.

Leaving that aside--.

The prince glanced at the item and lost interest, then he turned his sight to the agents.

"Even though I know that the captives in battlefield are prioritized to the captor, would you be willing to hand over those men to our country."
"I don't mind if you let me take custody of the girl over there."

Dealing with the agents afterward sounds troublesome, it's easier to let the people in charge to handle them.

The prince readily consented, so the fake apostle has been placed under my custody.
Now that I've sealed her dangerous Unique Skill, I'll leave her at some Zaikuon temple or monastery in some safe easy-to-live city.

An Urion priest soldier who has personal appraisal skill, [Judgment Eye] runs up to the prince and whispers something to his hear.
He reported that the agents were not ordinary mob.

"Incitement and Brainwashing?"
"That's some heretic skills.... Maybe there's some of their friends who can use mind magic?"
"Don't be stupid. If there's someone who can use such heretic magic, I'll feed them to the wyvern."

Looks like mind magic is more hated than I thought.
I'll keep the fact that there's someone who can use mind magic here a secret.

"Are you going to execute the ones who have Incitement and Brainwashing skills?"
"It should be fine as long as both of their eyes and mouths are blocked. Although this is the first time I meet people who have these skills, I've learned about it during my training when I was entrusted to be the person in charge of the checking station."

--Hohou?

I'd like to receive that training.
I'll ask Silga King if I could get one once we get back to the royal castle.

"Needless to say, block their mouth and suicide attempt."
"Yes, the one with Brainwashing skill might have influenced the soldiers in the station. I'll let soldiers who have just been assigned to be the guards."

The officers in this country seem to be quite excellent.

After getting all their equipment besides their underwear stripped, the agents who are tied with [Magic Sealing Chain] are carried by the soldiers to the station.
There were some men who shouted, [Save sensei!] among the refugees, but the soldiers quickly arrest and took them to the station together with the agents.

Next, we need to deal with the refugees.
As I switched my thought to that, roaring sounds and vibrations detained it.

"What happened!"
"The checking station's gate is collapsing!"

A soldier answered the prince.

"We're asking the reason! I'm going for a bit. You wait here with Sir Pendragon."

Macho Warrior ran to the station after saying so.

I wouldn't go with him even if he asked me to.
Because--.

"Suicide bombing?"
"Yeah, the station's gate has collapsed, pieces of meats are sticking to the surrounding wall and tower."

It'll appear in my dream if you explain it in detail so please stop that.
Without even listening to the prince and Macho Warrior's conversation, I know that all of the agents have died looking at the disappeared points on the map.
Looks like the sympathizer men and the soldiers who were with the agents instantly died too.

After that thorough physical check, just where did they hid the bombs.....
Good grief, please stop with suicide bombing terror in another world.

I searched [Bomb] on the map just in case and found a hit on a pregnant woman.
Looking with 3D display, I found that it was inside the pregnant woman's stomach.

I enter a bush once again and pull the [Bomb] from the pregnant woman with advanced space magic [Aport Object].
It seems the bomb is triggered when it's taken outside, it's swelling in my hand.

--I won't let it.

I put the bomb that was going to explode in my hand into my storage.

I deem [Cannibal Snake] which the agents belong to as the same dangerous organizations as the [Wings of Liberty] and the [Light of Liberty].
There's no need to be considerate with a group who made use of a pregnant woman to do bomb terrorism.

◇

"....■■■■■■■■■ Mass Heal All"

Once Sera completed her long long chant, more than 1000 refugees are wrapped in a giant light pillar that extends to the sky.
The glittering blue firefly light heals the refugees and washes away their fatigue.

"--Ooh, god."
"Onii-chan! Mother has woken up!"
"Something feels warm."
"My legs, I can move my legs."
"Feels nice.... I feel happy somehow. Wonder if the heaven is calling me."

Bright smiles return to the refugees who have been healed with Sera's holy magic.
There was a slightly dangerous remark mixed in, but it must just have been my mind tricking me so I ignore it.

I signal to the soldiers to carry barrels put with food and water to the refugees.
I've negotiated with the prince to share the food and water reserve of the

checking station.
Of course it was not free and I paid the price.

"That was Tenion-sama's holy mark--That person must be a saintess with the name."
"Let's pray to saintess-sama and Tenion-sama."

The religious officials who noticed the holy mark inside the light pillar astutely advertised and propagated it to the surrounding people.
Some people whose wounds are cured and stomachs are satisfied offer thankful prayers while looking content.
That circle spread like a chain reaction and reached the whole refugees.

Perhaps due to the effect of the people who are praying earnestly, Sera has gotten a new [Saintess] title.

『Saintess? No one praised me even though I worked that hard....』

The fake apostle who was kneeling behind me muttered her complaint with a gloomy face.
The soldiers who don't understand Japanese are looking at her weirdly.

Did the fake apostle haphazardly punish people without getting thanked by anyone?

I wanted to ask her circumstances, but since an old man with relatively good attires was coming here, I turned my attention to him.

"--How should we thank you."

The old man who introduced himself as a former representative of Makiwa Kingdom's Keldan town's governor prostrated himself before Sera and me.
It seems he was leading the refugees before the agents and their

sympathizers took over.

He thanked us for giving food and water to the refugees who had been weakened.

"Give your thanks not to me but His Highness who gave his permission to share the station's water and food."

Maybe because their countries were at odd, the old man was hesitating for a bit but then he finally fell prostrate and thanked the prince and Macho Warrior.

『There were people who were happy with my salt but there were lots who accused me "A smuggler!", tried to put me into jail and profited by reselling it.』

The fake apostle muttered grudge like she had fallen ill.
In a lot of cases, salt sale's right is held by countries or land lords, so you'll get caught if you carelessly sell them.

"So, has Makiwa Kingdom lost to Weasel Empire?"
"We don't know. Two days after the news that Marquis Dasles territory at the eastern end got attacked, our town at the northwest also got attacked by the empire's monster tamer army."

I check the map while listening to the old man.
Besides Makiwa Kingdom's Royal Capital and two towns, only the territory capital of the southern Muzaris Earldom is left in Makiwa Kingdom.

The town near Silga Kingdom has also been occupied by Weasel Empire's army, around 3000 refugees are currently moving toward Silga Kingdom.
It seems they're doing slave hunting, mercenary units under Weasel Empire are moving vigorously.

....I don't intend to participate in a war.

I don't want to see places where people die and I still don't like to see corpses even now.
I'm not good against violent scenes, and I don't take pleasures in overwhelmingly infringing other people with force.

However, I don't like this even more.

After considering a bit, I've decided.

『Tifaliza, when is the fitting-out of the airships from before completed?』
『The second airships in three days, the third airships in ten days.』

I talk to Tifaliza in Shiga Kingdom's Echigoya Firm through [Telephone].
She answered without getting surprised nor paused even though I called her suddenly.

『Kuro-sama should entrust it to General Manager Elterina if you want to hasten it. She should be able to make the second to depart the Royal Capital tomorrow and the third in two days.』

She gave that suggestion taking my intention into consideration.

『Okay, tell that to Manager.』
『--Please excuse me, but I think it'll be better if Kuro-sama directly instructs her. If you whisper close to her ears "I can only count on you", the wanted delivery date will certainly be fulfilled.』

It's rare for Tifaliza to make a joke.
I change the call and ask Manager to accelerate the departure.

『Please Elterina. I'm counting on you--』

And lastly, when I tried to joke as Tifaliza said, Manager who sounded excited interrupted.

『Leave it to me! Forget tomorrow, I'll make the warships depart by today's end. The rest of the fitting-out can just be done in the middle of the flight.』

--Ooh, the effectiveness is outstanding.

Alright, now the alibi for transporting the refugees is perfect.

◇

『The village I lived in was really really poor--』

After returning to Silga royal castle, I tried talking to the fake apostle, Kei, while waiting for the audience with the king.

I was hesitating for a bit, but I didn't call Arisa and Hikaru.
There was no danger physically speaking, but since I was slightly bothered with Kei's gloomy laugh, I decided to hear her out before the two.

『--I lived in terrible poverty, my past life looked like heaven in comparison. To be honest, it was enough to make me resent the god who reincarnated me.』

Kei talked about her birthplace while staring at the ground.
Sounds like it'll be a darker story than I thought.

『Even so you know, my parents this time were good people. They didn't hit me without reason or left me outside like my previous parents did,

they didn't cull me like other families did, and they raised me who was useless.』

Looks like she loves her parents in this world.
Kei's face smiled a little only when she talked about them.

『I, who was an urban junior high student, couldn't do anything. Even if I knew useful tools, I couldn't make them, and I didn't have money to ask someone to make them. And yet, I did as best as I could with my parents--』

--Her village was attacked by thieves.

『Everyone was dead when I came back from gathering nuts. I couldn't remember well after that. I didn't know whether the salt pillars that remained in the whited village were the thieves or villagers.』

Her Unique Skill probably went out-of-control.
I'm surprised she didn't turn into demon lord.

『At that time, I might have died if I didn't meet gramp who was on pilgrimage.... I guess that's good too? Then I'd be able to go to heaven with my parents.』

It's probably something that happens often in remote regions, but you just don't know how to console the one concerned.
I merely listened to her story quietly.

『Gramp was a priest-sama of Zaikuon Temple.』

--It's connected.

『He couldn't use holy magic since the god was weakened, but gramp said that he learned medicines to compensate for magic.』

I see since god Zaikuon died and holy magic became unusable, he learned the alternative.

『He said if Zaikuon temple's priests go around while doing good deeds, people who feel gratitude will give their prayers and the weakened god will become healthy, so we worked hard.』

Kei was visiting various countries with the old priest to impart their idea and techniques to the people of Zaikuon Temples.

『But it was a fruitless effort.... I forgot which city, but some priests who didn't like gramp giving medicines hired bad people to kill gramp.』

And then, after turning those evil priests and bad people into salt, she began to do the sham pilgrimage in place of the old priest alone.

Her skills are of the usual reincarnated person sets, and then [Hunger Resistance], [Rot Resistance], [Poison Resistance], [Disease Resistance], [Paralyze Resistance], [Good Walker], [Compounding] and lastly [Holy Magic: Zaikuon Belief].
She couldn't heal the refugees after all, she probably can't invoke the magic even if she has the skill.

『This world is a shitty game. That's why, I'll revive the god and make this world right.... A world where good people won't have unpleasant things happening to them, a world where bad people will surely be punished.... That's why, I--』

--Calling herself Zaikuon apostle, and punishing the evil are probably her way to do her justice.

I let Kei who began to laugh as if cramping to sleep with mind magic, and then I called Sera in the next room to use her holy magic on Kei who was

having a nightmare so she can sleep peacefully.
Holy magic is good for this kind of thing.

Her last line is a dangerous way of thinking, but she lacks knowledge and experience to realize the thing she wants.
I don't care whether god Zaikuon is revived or not, but I'll let Kei to study with a teacher to correct her way.

Moreover, there should be other people who weren't bad yet got turned into salt by her [Infinite Salt Maker], so I have to make her make up for it and visit their graves once her study is done to some extent.
While we're at it, I'll let her mingle with various countries and people's hierarchy to broaden her view.

◇

"--Have you decided to accept the refugees?"
"Regarding that matter.... Since the scale was bigger than I expected, I cannot decide it on my own."

I met the king and talked about the way to cope with the refugees.

After that time, I talked to the old man representative from before, it seemed Makiwa Kingdom's racial discrimination stemmed from the assassinations of Marquis Dasles's family and Makiwa King by white tigerkin.
After those incidents, rejection campaign toward the white tigerkin unnaturally exploded and developed toward the whole demi-humans.

There's a high chance that people who were like those agents were behind the rejection campaign.

If that's the whole story, then the root of the racial discrimination seems shallow.

"So, until the decision from my country comes, I'm thinking of putting a monster barrier in the valley near the border to Makiwa Kingdom to be a temporary foreign settlement."

Eventually, I want to send them home together with the ones taken by the slave hunters.
Moreover, Silga Kingdom's nobles would probably complain if there were a large mass near the national border after all.

"Did my son not tell you? That's the hunting ground of Fort Phanters y'know? Monster barrier has no meaning before a Fort Phanter."
"Please don't worry, my subordinates will take care of that."

I've already dispatched the beastkin girls, currently they must be hunting the Fort Phanters around the area.
I've also asked Mia to make a spring with her advanced level water magic.

"Sir Pendragon, are you aware of an organization called『Cannibal Snake』?"
"If I'm not mistaken, it's the organization the spies who destroyed the checking station belong to. I'm sorry but I don't know any further."

Silga King shakes his head.

"Then, how about『Glutton Racoon』and『Filth Eater Fox』?"
"No, unfortunately I don't know them. Is there any relation with the aforementioned『Cannibal Snake』?"
"That I don't know. The two I mentioned earlier were organizations whose members had Incitement and Brainwashing skills used by Furu Empire a long time ago. I remember a story about people who inherited those organizations' names laying waste to Shiga Kingdom during the era of the

mad king Galtafut. I thought a noble of Shiga Kingdom like Viscount-sama would know about them."

Fumu, organizations of an ancient empire huh....

At the very least, organizations called [Glutton Racoon] and [Filth Eater Fox] don't seem to exist within my range.
I can't use extensive search since there are many people who have Incitement skill.

There's only several people with Brainwashing skill in a country it seems. It's more numerous than I thought.

I tried to examine the map closer but there was no one who belonged to organizations with similar name.

Silga King put several terms for the matter of the foreign settlement, but I agreed to them since they were something that could be solved with money.

Time is precious right now.

◇

Our airship departed to Shiga Kingdom.
I don't have time to keep the fake apostle Kei company so I let her sleep with continuous-type mind magic and left her in the airship. She's going to wake up in three days, but my business should be over by that time.

"Are you ready everyone?"
"But of course! We checked our equipment for 10 times already."

With Arisa in the lead, everyone nodded.
Matching that movement, the rabbit ears and the colorful feathers swayed.

"Alright, let's go!"

We, Team Pendragon, depart to Makiwa Kingdom that's in war.
Now, let's protect the refugees from the slave hunting groups.

14-43. War Kingdom (1) Scientific Weapons

*

"Wheel Chief! We can see Makiwa Kingdom's capital in the front!"
"Stop. Operator, stop the followers too."

Steel box-like weapons of the weaselkin stopped on top of the cliff.
Although it looks like a golem carriage, it has a peculiar shape where there's a box on top of a flat box and a long and narrow cylinder attached to the top box.
The tiger and lionkin slaves on the vehicles are watching the surrounding.

After the slaves confirmed that there were no danger in the surrounding, the top of the top box opened, and a weaselkin man called Wheel Chief showed his face.
Wheel Chief sprawled on the clifftop and checked the capital using a magic tool that looked like two attached tubes to see from a distance.
He's not wearing armor despite being a soldier, only sturdy looking clothes.

From here to the capital, it's about half a ri in weaselkin's unit, and around 3KM in earth unit.

"The Rocket Raccoon unit and Iron Hopper Cavalry have spread out in front of the capital huh.... As expected of the mobile corps."

100 Rocket Raccoons as big as three adult men and 3000 Iron Hoppers as big as a horse are lined up in front of the capital.
Screw-like suspicious magic tools are attached on top of the monsters' heads.
The riders in the box on the back of the monsters are probably using those magic tools to control them.

"Captain, will Makiwa knights come out?"
"Oh they will."

The one next to a Wheel Chief called Captain was a young Wheel Chief of a trailing vehicle.

"--Rather, if they don't, the Rocket Raccoons and Iron Hoppers can just jump over the wall and devastate the capital."
"They're in the palm of Tactician-sama aren't they."

Captain looks sullen, it seems he doesn't like the Tactician.

"We're a bit too far from here. We'll move to the ruins of hunting mansion over there."
"Understood."

By Captain's order, the vehicles move again.
Buzz, buzz, clang, clang, while spreading strange noise that won't lose to their appearances, they move while leaving strange wheel tracks.

If there were a modern Japanese man here, he surely would call the vehicles.

--Tanks.

◇

"Wheel Chief, we got a new message from headquarter. The scouts who had infiltrated the capital could only identify『Water』and『Earth』, the『Wind』and『Fire』weren't there."
"Alright!"

Wheel Chief grinned and struck his fist at his palm.

"This war--we've won."
"Is Fire--the Crimson Wand that Marquis Dasles had really that dreadful?"

With his military shoes, Wheel Chief trampled the bored loading officer's head who interrupted.

Marquis Dasles territory in Makiwa Kingdom is the closest to the weaselkin territory, but the weaselkin never tried to invade it even after utterly destroying Lionkin and Tigerkin Kingdoms.

And, it's widely known how the mentioned Lionkin Kingdom tried to invade Makiwa Kingdom many times only to be repulsed by Marquis Dasles for generations.
The story about how they killed enemy troops who invaded the territory but never once pursued the troops who got out of the territory out of mercy is also famous.

"Even General ordered us to retreat without attacking if Marquis Dasles appeared."
"What did Tactician-sama said?"

Wheel Chief once again trampled the loading officer's head who implied that the tactician was greater than the general.

"Listen okay? Dasles isn't someone to be afraid of. The Crimson Wand he has is."

The Crimson Wand handed down in Marquis Dasles house is famous as a treasured wand which contains flame spirit, but at the same time it's also said that it's a cursed item that makes fire monsters gather.

Including Marquis Dasles's Crimson Wand, this Makiwa Kingdom has four lords with elemental wands.

Holding the Roaring Vibration Wand that rules over earth, Earl Jizaros of the north.
Holding the Surging Wave Wand that rules over water, Earl Mizaras of the west.
Holding the Typhoon Wand that rules over the wind, Earl Muzaris of the south.

According to the contact earlier, it appears Earl Jizaros of the Roaring Vibration Wand and Earl Mizaras of the Surging Wave Wand are in the royal castle.
Their easy-to-be-confused names seem to be infamous among diplomats and young people who aspire to enter into military service.

"This tank and cannonball are weak against fire. It can't defend against Crimson Wand with just fireproof magic enchant."

The operator thought that it was just another of the mighty elemental wands of the four house with a different element, but he wisely judged that it would only bring the Wheel Chief's shoes onto his head if he said it out loud.

"A report from the ratkin keeping watch! A super huge golem three time as big as the outer wall has appeared."
"So it appeared at last. There's no water dragon huh?"
"Yes, it's just the golem."
"Good, activate the engine! Order the soldiers outside to hide in the bush! Operator, tell the other vehicles to get ready."
"Understood."

The soldiers get ready as the war begins.

"Is there still no signal?"
"--There it is! Two black balls, permission to engage."

Wheel Chief gave his order as a report from the observer came.

"Good! Take the aim. Gunman, you don't need to aim at the legs, just shoot at the golem's huge chest!"
"Wheel Chief, what to do with Captain's wait and see--"

The loading officer stuffs a huge long and thin cannonball into the barrel, the gunman turns the handle and adjusts the cannon's angle.

"The era of huge golems in battlefields has ended. Exposing such a stupidly huge target--"

He checks the slide rule result in the scope.

"I'm aiming, I'll aim at ya, alright, here! Aim and shoot!"

With the gunner's shout, the steel cannonball flies over one kilometer away.

The super huge golem that was peerless against the Rocket Raccoons and Iron Hoppers stopped moving with a roaring sound.
It tried to balance itself after a bit, but it couldn't stand the countless cannonballs shot at its chest as its ankle broke, and fell behind while breaking the capital's wall.

Earth, sand and dust overrun the capital with terrific force.

"Alright, you did well! The knights are coming out next! Prepare the buckshots."
"Captain, a new report from Tank #2. They want to start the『Magic

Eater』 experiment, so they ask for an escort."
"Hoo, so it's finally time for the『Magic Eater』 experiment huh--The top might be thinking to meddle with Shiga Kingdom too eh."

Wheel Chief licked his lips when he heard the operator's report.

"Captain, how should we reply?"
"Tell them understood. Inside the『Magic Eater』, only we, Scientific Tank Unit can fight properly--"

"Knights without physical reinforcements are just tasty meatballs. We'll run and kill them over the caterpillars."

Hearing Wheel Chief, the silent pilot laughs dryly 'kehi kehi'.
The tank corps started their attack on the capital while being wrapped in complicated mood.

◇

"From the north gate, there's 10 knights, 500 light knights--this is bad! The water dragon appeared from the west gate!"
"We're leaving it alone, first we need to pluck the feathers of Magic Beast Units to prevent them from flying."
"You sure are some careful guy."

It seems destroying units with the ability to fly is a normal practice in this world.

"Captain, don't you think it's strange?"
"What is?"

He ignored the loading officer and asked back the operator.

"Earl Jizaros of Roaring Vibration Wand isn't summoning the next golem. It should have been about time for his magic power to recover enough with magic potion...."
"Come to think of it, that is strange--tell the HQ. They probably have realized it already, but just in case."
"Understood."

Wheel Chief ordered after pondering the operator's words.
It's the HQ's job to think about the whole picture--looks like that's what he's concluded.

"Water dragon's breath is coming."

The after-wave of the water dragon's breath graze the tanks.

"--Damage minimum. Several desant soldiers are deserting."
"We can collect them later. Right now charge!"

It seems the life of Tank Desant's soldiers are light in this world.

"Signal balls--three red balls. They're invoking『Magic Eater』."
"The vibration suppression machine will stop. Careful not to bite your tongue."

A vehicle with round ring attached on it got close to the capital and shot out black ripples.
The vibration on the tanks became intense the moment those ripples touched them.

"To the front, knights are coming."
"Gunman! Rout them!"
"Ou! No need to aim! Eat this!"

The tank's barrel spouts out black smoke, a different cannonball from earlier approaches the knights.

"Advance while ignoring the missed shots!"
"""OU!"""

The knights are pressing on while ignoring the cannonball which is coming toward no one, but then the shell disperses in the air, scattering innumerable buckshot.

"Such feeble pebbles are nothing against magic armors, my『Vajra』and tempered muscles--"

The knight in the lead died without being able to finish his words.
They died without noticing that their enchanted armors became mere metal armor and their proud skills had been neutralized until the very end.

Even the lucky knights who survived were either ran over by the caterpillars or got their hearts stabbed by the tankmen's spears.

The magic beast corps whose movements become dull cross over the main gate to attack the capital.

"Don't fall behind them! Shoot fire bombs at the royal castle from the cliff before the west gate!"

Wheel Chief is burning with ambition to leave a military record of damaging the capital, which is usually protected by defensive wall from the City Core, from outside.

However, the world is not that easy.

◇

"Ca-Captain! It's badbadbadbad"
"Calm down!"

The head of the gunner who shouted like he was broken was kicked.

--GWLOROOOOOUNN!

The soldiers who heard the roar stiffened from fear.
The hardened Wheel Chief forcefully moves and opens the hatch, turning his head toward the blue sky.

A flock of dragons are flying in the sky.

There's even a more than 80 meter long lesser dragon leading the four.
The white dragon in the back is only 30 meter long, but that's not a consolation.

"Why are the Silga Kingdom's dragons here...."

If the people of the country muttered by Wheel Captain heard that, they would shake their heads.
'Our country's dragons-sama are not that big', or so they'd say.

"--Captain."

The white dragon is swooping towards the tanks.

"Rotate at once. We're escaping once we surprise it!"
"Captain, it's no good."
"Loading fool shut up. Right now our top priority is to bring the tank back to the home town."

"--Not that."
"What is not that!"
"That's not just a dragon, it's a Dragon Knight."
"Impossible...."

That's an unrealistic existence that only appears in fairy tales about heroes.
During the last 1000 years, there were only two existences that were called Dragon Knights, Shiga Kingdom's Ancestor King Yamato and Silga Kingdom's Wandering King Riui.

"All four of them are Dragon Knights?!"

There's no more reliable existence if they are allies, but they're nothing but nightmare if they are enemies.

Their only chance to win is--.

"Captain, let's do it! We have『Magic Eater』right now."
"That's right! If we use all the experimental anti-aircraft high explosive projectiles, even if we're up against the invincible dragons!"
"Alright, let's wait and bombard them! Gain the time for the consort plane to escape!"

It seems they're betting on the slight possibility even though there are people who are in despair.

"I'll be watching their faces the moment they're wounded now that there's no magic wall defending their proud scales."

The white dragon is assaulting while a lizardkin child on its back swinging its tail buzzingly.

"That's an awfully small lizardkin isn't it?"

"Shoot!"
"--Eat this!"

The cannonball shot at 50 meter short distance blasted in the air, scattering piece of metals.
It's a certain kill distance even if the opponent is a dragon.

"--That was surprising, nanodesu."

The lizardkin child jumped down in front of the dragon and repelled all the metal pieces.
The sword would have been broken if it was a normal sword.

"It's nothing compared to Tama's shuriken nanodesu."

Swing, the lizardkin child who landed in one revolution, shutan, takes a strange pose.

"Pochi will forgive you if you surrender nodesuyo?"

The caterpillar blows backward, and then accelerates with that recoils, rushing toward the lizardkin child.

"Pochi punch, nanodesu!"
"Not noticing the『Magic Eater』is your lost! Regret after getting ran over!"

In a situation without magic power, a small fist is crashing into tons of iron lump.
There is no need to narrate the result.

--Or should have been.

◇

The next time Wheel Chief who was sure of his victory came to himself, he was on top of a mat along with the other tankmen with a burning tank nearby.
Even though the front of the tank was squashed flat, the pilot was uninjured lying nearby. For some reason he's not wearing trousers, but it doesn't seem like it's hollowed out.

"Have you come to desuka? Pochi recommends surrendering nodesu."
"Okay, we surrender. My uncle is in the senate. Please ask the ransom money to the senate."

He agreed to the advice of the lizardkin child, whose tail swings like a dogkin, to surrender.
It seems he's judged that people of a country with no science won't be able to understand the principle behind the tank with how bad it's burning.

"....Tell me one thing."
"The war is over already nodesu. Pochi doesn't mind one question nodesuyo?"
"How did you wreck the vehicle we were riding on?"
"Of course it's because of this thoroughly tempered steel body nodesu!"

It's a squishy hand that doesn't look like a steel at all--beastkin's hand? When the Wheel Chief looked at it again, it had come back to lizardkin's hand.

"Pochi forgot that the glove was off nodesu. Pochi's identity was almost exposed nodesu. Allies of justice are better unidentified nodesu. Miserable hell where even tears of blood freeze over waits for people who know the secret nodesuyo?"

Wheel Chief shakes his head vigorously toward the glittering eyes.

"--It's fine if you didn't see it nodesu."

In order to varnish over it, Wheel Chief forcefully turned back the topic.

"Magic power?"
"That's right, how did you do it in a place where magic power is sealed."
"That's easy nanodesu! Fighting in a space where magic is nu is the basic of the basic nanodesu. If you can't do that much, you'll be toyed with by the Ropper Rokkun in the labyrinth's lower layer nodesuyo."

Wheel Chief dryly laughed at the dogkin child wearing lizard costume who was nodding.
Apparently, there are existences outside of his common sense in this world.

Thus, the battle between the first deployment of Weaselkin scientific weapons VS Makiwa Kingdom, the unreasonable fantasy victory ended.

The identity of the mysterious Dragon Knights who saved Makiwa Kingdom this day is wrapped in mystery with no one knowing.
Further, the Wheel Chief who saw the only glimpse of their identity takes the secret to his grave.

14-44. War Kingdom (2) Dragon Riders

*

Satou's here. I think a country can feel proud just by being safe and secure. While that may be true, parading in clothes that are as good as being half-naked in a business district at night is truly sexy but cute--I mean no, for adults with good sense, I think it's necessary to be careful. Even if I'm thinking "Nice, do it more" in my head.

◇

『Enemies found~?』
『Master! There are bad people nodesu!』

Tama and Pochi talk through the [Tactic Talk] which is superior in counterintelligence.

As we entered Makiwa Kingdom, we caught a sight of the refugees escaping to the west and slave-hunting mercenaries chasing them.
Both the escapees and the pursuers are humans.

『I'll save that group. Everyone please stop the battle in front of the royal capital if it looks like it'll be decisive.』
『Okay, this will be a cinch with the Evil Dragons.』

As Arisa's said, I've summoned the Evil Dragon family from the labyrinth's lower layer for their coercive effect.
The father Evil Dragon was hesitating to let anyone besides me riding on them, but they were unexpectedly cooperative to act as the dragon rides after sensing Black Dragon's presence who played with everyone yesterday.

Further, since Black Dragon is too enthusiastic and prone to run amok, I'm not bringing him here.

『Lyuryu is also with us nanodesu!』

--LYURYURYUUU.

The white lesser dragon that Pochi rides on cried peculiarly.

We're equipped with the golden armor disguise version since today is an operation of absolute secrecy.
The defensive power are the same as the original golden armor, but our appearances become to look like various beastkins like lizardkin. This is not magic but special make-up technique which is also used on Satou doll.

Liza and Mia are disguising as rabbitkin, Pochi and Tama as lizardkin, Nana and Lulu as birdkin, and Arisa as catkin.
Unfortunately, Hikaru is supervising the foreign settlement, while Zena-san and the others are to stay in the airship and the solitary island palace.

We're using these kind of disguises in order to hide our identities as well as to sweep away demi-humans' discriminations in Makiwa Kingdom.

Leaving that aside, let's help the people who are being chased.

I waved my hand to Arisa and the others who are heading toward the royal capital, produced the newly developed artificial spirits [Griffon Riders] and then nose dived to the ground.
After all, if there were only a few people, there would probably be some who would guess our identities.

◇

"Hyahha! Run, run, you garbage!"
"If you're caught by the sca~ry onii-san, you're going to become slaves y'know~?"

The mercenaries chasing after the screaming refugees are purposely not catching up to them while smiling sadistically.

"Boss, that!"
"You fools, call me captain!"

The mercenary leader who look up at us after getting urged by his friend looks terrified.
Looks like he realized that they've become the hunted now.

『Everyone, permission to trample.』

--PYWEEEE!

The knights riding on the Griffons' backs cannot talk, so the Griffons are abiding my order.
More than 100 [Griffon Riders] hunt the mercenaries.

Of course non-lethal is the default.

The Griffons' claws and beaks have the anti-personnel [Soft Stun] and [Paralyze] magic effect added on them, while the lances that the knights riding on the Griffons' backs hold have [Pain Force] in addition to the two above.

This [Pain Force] is a mind magic that will cause sense of pain without inflicting physical injury.

It's an original magic remodeled from the torture-use [Pain] magic exclusively for punishment, it has a limiter to limit the pain only at the level of [Tooth extraction without anesthetic] so it won't mistakenly kill people.
Rather, I think the remodeled version is better suited for torture, but all is good since I'm not going to tell it to others anyway.

Voice of suffering and dread roll up from among the mercenaries who are getting trampled down by the Griffon riders.
I can leave arresting the mercenaries to them. The automatic AI of the artificial spirits are truly capable.

"We've taken care of the slave hunt! You don't need to run away! I repeat--
"

Without taking part in the mercenary trampling, I go around telling the escapees that there's no danger anymore.

--Huh? Aren't they running away more frantically compared to when they were chased by the mercenaries?

"It's the weaselkin's magic beast troops!"
"We'll get eaten if we don't run!"

Attentive Ears skill picked up such desperate voices from the tumult.
Dang, people who aren't used to seeing Griffons will think that they're not mythical beasts but monsters huh....

I deport the Griffon I'm riding, take out a single-seater small airship from my storage and ride on it.

"We've taken care of the slave hunt! You don't need to run away! I repeat--
"

This time it went well.
Several refugees stopped, and some people began to wave their hands at me.

"Isn't that elf-sama's Light Ship from the fairy tale?"
"There's no way demi-humans would save us."
"It must be the silver ship that Saga Empire's Hero-sama rides."

Looks like there are some people who discriminate against elves too in this country.
I go around and repeat the announcement to the leaders of the refugees.

There was only 5 KM wide of area to cover so it completed shortly after and then I landed in front of the leading carriages.

A woman in her twenties wearing red dress comes out of the carriage before I show my face.
For some reason, she's carrying a rod-shaped thing wrapped in cloth.

According to the AR-reading, the inside of the cloth seems to be a fire booster type of wand called [Crimson Wand].

"Thank you very much for your help. My name is Shelmina Dasles, the chief administrator of Marquis Dasles's territory."

Marquis Dasles was the house name of the pyromaniac noble who was chasing after the white tigerkin princess.
This woman brings about calm atmosphere you wouldn't have guessed that she was from the same family as the pyromaniac noble who felt abnormal.

"Li-Lizard."
"I thought it was an elf, turned out it was a frog-eater."

The one who exchanged insults that could be heard from afar were the young nobles behind Miss Shelmina.

"Toger, Besso, what are you doing abusing the person who saved us! Shame on you."

I was going to ignore them, but Miss Shelmina harshly rebuked them with the force of raging fire.
After the young nobles opened and closed their mouths like they had forgotten to breath, they apologized to me.
It was a completely superficial apologize, but since I'm not going to meet them again, I lightly ignore it.

"Umm, could you give me your name?"
"I'm the Dragon Knight Outis of the Lion Knight Order."

For this case, I've picked the famous name from the Greek mythology which means [nobody].
My affiliation is a bit tangled, but since my companions are going to appear as Dragon Knights, it's probably better for me to be the same as them.

"Outis-sama, it might be shameful of me to ask you of this while not even being able to reward you for saving us--"

Miss Shelmina put her hands on her chest and entreated.
She's probably going to ask me to escort them to a safe place.

"--There are several people who have been caught by the Weasel Empire slave hunters. I would like you to please help us save them."

Fumu, that one huh.

She asked me to help them, but her force only consists of 10 knights and

around 50 nobles of which only five who have battle skills.

"Okay. I'll grant your wish."

I look for the locations of the captured refugees on the map and deploy the Griffon Riders there.
There are channels between the artificial spirits and the user that connect our consciousness, it's really useful in cases like this.

"Thank you very much. Please use me and the knights as decoys."

The nobles are scowling at Miss Shelmina from behind, as if saying 'don't say unnecessary things'.
I don't feel like saving the ones who run away for their self interest, but I tell her, "There's no need" briefly.

That is because the Griffon Rider unit who are moving at high speed are already infringing the mercenaries.

"Please don't belittle me just because I'm a woman! Even though I look like this, I've been entrusted with the Crimson Wand by uncle. I can't use secret art of the Crimson Wand yet, but I can handle being a diversion."

Without listening to the nobles who told her to stop, she unwrapped the cloth and showed me the wand.
The ruby-like jewel on the tip of the wand is quite beautiful, but the miasma lump that's moving like a wriggling black snake inside the jewel looks gross. It looks like it'll curse you just by seeing it.

"I already said that it's unnecessary. My subordinates are already heading there."
"Subordinates?"

Come to think of it, she didn't see the Griffon Riders did she.

I let a Griffon Rider who was hunting at the nearest place to fly pass above us, showing its figure.

"Raptor head with lion body--that's the mythical beast Griffon!"
"Moreover, there's a knight riding on its back."
"It's a Griffon Knight!"

The ones who shouted were not Miss Shelmina but the young nobles behind her.
Putting aside their personalities, it looks like they're knowledgeable.

"The person just now told me. They've saved all the refugees and taken care the mercenaries--"
"I suppose that you are related to Silga Kingdom. Would you escort us to the neighboring country?"

An old noble who suddenly showed up beside Miss Shelmina demanded as such when I was talking.
The other nobles rode on his coattails, asking the same in chorus.

"Very well--however, the Griffons only allow people they recognize to ride on them, and my ship can only carry one person. Gather the people here as I will send a big airship to pick us up."
"Thank you for your kindness."

The old noble conveyed his gratitude.
The nobles who wanted to ride on my airship sighed dejectedly, but they regained their spirit after hearing that a big airship would come.

I take food out of my Storage.

They're cereal bar-like food made from a mix of Giant Kelp powder, miscellaneous dried fish and sea serpent's meat.
Echigoya Firm didn't make them, I used a personal manufacturing magic

so no one can trace it back.

I distributed these in the Snow Kingdom, but they're convenient in this kind of situations.

Next, I make a huge reservoir with earth magic and put in a large quantity of drinking water from the Storage.
I can use magic to produce water, but it'll just be a waste of magic power.

Lastly, I make a clay wall covering an area wide enough for a city and exterminate some pest.
I leave behind several Griffon Riders to guard the refugees and leave the place.

"Outis-sama, could you escort me back to Makiwa Kingdom's royal castle? Now that the safety of the people has been guaranteed, I have a duty to fulfill as a noble, I've to hurry to His Majesty's side."
"I already said before, my ship can only hold one passenger. Give it up."

It's not like it's impossible if we try, but I'd feel somehow guilty to Aze-san if I were to spend some time glued with a beautiful woman with a nice body.

◇

『Jaryuu One speaking, Guruu Head please reply.』 <TLN: Jaryuu= Evil Dragon.>
『Griffon Head speaking. Don't get the call sign wrong. Is there something wrong?』
『It's terrible!』

According to Arisa, besides the tamed monster battalions, it seems there are also tank-like armored vehicle units.

At first I thought they were manned golems, but it seems they're really shaped like tanks.

Tanks are certainly amazing, but even if they have the latest model of the modern tanks, I don't think they're that much of a threat.
However, just like Corpse in labyrinth's lower has said back then, it'll be bad if it violates the god's taboo.
If the weaselkin were to be destroyed, it'd be their own fault, but I imagine god's divine punishment to be sketchy.

From the info I got from various sources, the weaselkin troops should have been formed of tamed monsters and manned golems.
If Arisa really didn't mistake it, I might have to investigate the reason as to why these scientific weapons suddenly appeared.

Of course I'll interrogate the tanks' and the armored cars' crew members, other than that, I'll also extract information from the weaselkin merchant who should be in Silga Kingdom's underground jail.
If they don't know, maybe I'll just infiltrate Weasel Empire and directly investigate it?
It might be a good idea to visit the hero who's trying to defeat the demon lord while we're at it.

『Ah! The battle has begun!』
『Master, permission to charge.』
『Arisa, are there something like anti-aircraft gun and missile tanks?』
『Doesn't look like there's any of that. There are 20 tanks and 10 armored cars.』

I feel that the armored cars are too few.

『Don't get hurt no matter what happens.』
『Aye aye sir~』
『Roger nanodesu.』

『Nn, leave it to me.』

The youth troupe replied energetically.

『Lifting off the stealth system. Nana and Lulu, please get ready.』
『air-to-surface defense has been put into operation, so I report.』
『Liza-san, I'm ready too.』

Liza who's riding on the father Evil Dragon is taking the command.
While watching the spectacular battle with [Clairvoyance] magic, I also manage the refugees' rescue and guidance.

It might be a good idea to recapture one nearest city from the weasel force and secure accommodations for the refugees.

14-45. War Kingdom (3) The Weasel's Aim

*

Satou's here. When I went abroad, it made me realize the virtue of Japanese service, at the same time, I also felt its lack of fortitude needed to handle guests with bad attitude. Although not to the extreme as the Code of Hammurabi, I don't think there's any need to be overly polite to someone with no manners.

◇

"Your Majesty! The scout dispatched to the east gate has found the honorable body of His Excellency Jizaros among the golem's wreckage."
"Jizaros of the earth right after Mizaras of the water...."

When I came to Makiwa Kingdom's royal castle to talk about the post-war processing, the young king was currently receiving reports about the death from his close associates.
Reading the mood, I abstain myself from butting in for a while.

I wanted to end the war right before it started, but it seems there are many deaths still.
Good grief, I just don't understand what's in the mind of the people who seek war. Is it really that fun to be the king of the hill and domineer over people?
It'll be no exaggeration to call these people who love troublesome things masochists.

This time I bent my principle and intervened since I found refugees being chased by slave hunters on my map, but I'd like to make this a special case this once.
It's better for me and my congenial friends and companions to go on a

humorous pleasure trip.

While thinking like that, the talk in the audience chamber progresses.

"So, was the Roaring Vibration Wand found close by the body?"
"No.... The retainers of His Excellency Jizaros are currently searching for it."

I tried searching for it since I was bored but the item called Roaring Vibration Wand didn't exist in this kingdom.
It probably fell on the east gate and got crushed under the super huge golem.

Further, we have finished saving the people who survived with space magic and Tama's ninjutsu.

"It was probably taken away by Izukoka spies. The Roaring Vibration Wand and the Surging Wave Wand have lost, the representative of Marquis Dasles who carries the Crimson Wand is also missing. In hindsight, Earl Muzaris who barricaded himself in his own territory and ended up being safe can be called an ironic result."

The one who sarcastically and verbally attacked the young king was not this kingdom's noble but a military diplomat from Saga Empire. Looks like he's an earl for once.

"--Izukoka? You mean the Weasel Empire."
"Minister, the enemies aren't only the ones in front of you. The Four Treasured Wands are also quite attractive in the neighboring Silga and Shiga Kingdom's eyes."
"Saga Empire is--No, do you really believe the fairy tale that says『Offer the four orbs and the sky city Nenerie from the age of gods that sleeps in the sea will be awoken.』?"
"Isn't it nice to have a dream. Moreover--"

Fumu, it's like the Shadow Castle of Rumooku huh--no wait, I thought the name Nenerie sounds familiar, wasn't it the undersea city in Marquis Ganika's trench.
Don't tell me, the huge undersea ruin I found when we were on our way to the labyrinth city from Boruenan was also a floating continent that sleeps in the sea?

Leaving aside the mysterious undersea ruin, since the undersea city [Nenerie] is vastly bigger than the Shadow Csatle, it'll be quite a mass weapon if it flies.
Since I know where it is, I'll mark it so I'll know when it moves.

I wonder if that was the reason the Weasel Empire invaded?

When I was going to mark Miss Shelmina's Crimson Wand just in case, I saw that it was moving at high speed toward the east.
Looks like it's been stolen by someone.
I'm amazed that it could happen considering I had left three Griffon Riders there.

I call Arisa through [Tactic Talk] while tying the knots.

『Arisa, there's an additional mission.』
『Okay, what should we do?』

I ask Arisa who replied immediately to recover the Crimson Wand.

I also tried searching the fourth Typhoon Wand while I was at it, but like the Roaring Vibration Wand and the Surging Wave Wand, it didn't exist in the kingdom.
Looks like it's been stolen already.
I felt like I couldn't find the wand's owner, Earl Muzaris, somehow so I ignored it.

"And, who are those Dragon Knights after all?"
"They are the heroes who saved our country from ruin."

The minister replied the young king with a non-answer.
It'll be at least an hour before the generals who departed to where Liza and the others were come back, so he's probably just answering randomly.
Apparently, these ministers are taking this young king lightly.

This is just right, since they're talking about us, I'm going to appear now.

"--That's right."
"Who are you!"
"Dragon Knight Outis. I've safeguarded Shelmina-dono."
"T-the Crimson Wand is!"

Oy oy, at least worry about Miss Shelmina formally, mr. King.

"She had it when I saved her."

I said it like such since I didn't want to tell the truth somehow.

"I-I see..."

The king who looked relieved sank down the throne.

My log indication moves at that time--.

The golem unit that was doing the rescue at the western part of Makiwa Kingdom changed to [Waiting Order] state according to the log.
Looks like the Griffon Riders that were with them have begun to move toward the royal castle where I am.
I'd have no job for them even if they got here so I made them go to other

cities to save the captured people.

"Dragon Knight-dono, you've done a great job. A fitting reward for the great hero who saved our country would be--"

In place of the hopeless king, a scheming minister tried to negotiate while pretending to praise me.
I have a hunch that he'll try to make an empty promise.

I have no need of rewards, but there's no need to hold back when the other party is fully intending to shirk on it anyway.

"I have three demands--"

Thus, I thrust my demands without hesitation.

"--We will claim all the monsters and the prisoners of war related to Weasel army we defeated, and armaments we confiscated. In addition, as a reward of recapturing the western city of Makiwa Kingdom, 100.000 gold coins--"

The king and the ministers screamed the moment I said [100.000 gold coins].
I think it's cheap compared to the value of the City Core, but it seems to be excessive from their sense of value.

"--we wanted to demand that much, but if you can make a firm promise to do an all-out aid for the people who were chased out of the city, we will withdraw from that."

These demands are light, I can't ask for more than than a verbal promise since the king can unilaterally revoke a normal [Contract] using the City Core power.
Of course I can perfectly bind him with my [Geass], but he's probably

going to keep the promise since it's about his own nation.
I should know whether they fulfill the promise or not the next time I visit here as Satou.
If it's not kept, then I'm sure that they'll remember about it if I just ask Pochi and Lyuryu to circle the sky above the royal castle once.

"And, the third, you're prohibited from marching your troops to the Weasel Empire as a retaliation for three years."

The retaliation is probably needed for the king to save his face, and the people probably can't endure it, so I force it as a demand from the Dragon Knights who saved the country.
In addition, in the case the Weasel Empire re-invaded, the third term would be annulled.

Although, since the fact that the Dragon Knights are allies of Makiwa Kingdom should be well known by now, there's probably little chance of Weasel Empire invading again.

Oops, even though I said three demands, I forgot one more.

"By the way, King."
"....W-what."

Called by me, the young king replied while having a cramped smile.

"I heard that your people call us lizardkin as『Frog-eaters』derogatorily--"

I glare at the young king while being careful not to put Coercion skill on it.
I continue before the king whose mouth is flapping open and closed can spin words.

"--That is not true right? We rushed to your rescue exactly because of our

tolerance to humans and respect to the late king. If it was a gathering of low-life who speak such a derogatory term--"

I execute [Coercion] skill this time, the people around besides the king are so terrified they forgot to breath.

"When that happens, you can imagine where the Dragon Breath which befell the weasel people will be pointed at."
"A-alright. I-I will endeavor, m-my ruling while engraving, your w-warning in my heart."

The only one whom I didn't use Coercion skill on, the king replied my threat disjointedly.
I don't think the discrimination against demi-humans will be gone with just this, but once the top people's sense change and the ones who push the discrimination are gone, the people's perception should gradually change once they get help from the demi-humans.

It might even be a good idea to visit the country as Satou and popularize a dish secretly made with frogs.

◇

"Welcome back, Master!"
"I'm back, Arisa."

I reunite with my companions after finishing my business in the royal castle.

Oops, Arisa jumped while yelling like Pochi.
Arisa whispered "I never heard about the biplane" in my ears.

"Did the recovery go well?"
"But of course!"

After giving me the Crimson Wand, Arisa made a space from the space magic [Garage] and showed a biplane inside it.
It's certainly an airplane although it looks retro.

"You're too close."

"Carrying out Mia's instruction, so I inform."
"Ahn, isn't fine for a bit."

Mia ordered Nana to tear Arisa off me.

I extend my [Magic Hand] to Arisa's [Garage] and move the biplane into my Storage.
Surprisingly, the biplane isn't equipped with magic device but a scientific internal-combustion engine. I'll bring it to Corpse in the labyrinth's lower layer to look at.

While I'm at it, I invoke spirit magic [Misty Fog] to make a fog wall so we can't be seen from the royal capital.

"Master, Evil Dragons are watching the disarmed captives in the royal capital surrounding."
"Thank you, Liza."

The spoils from the defeated monsters and the seized things are gathered in one place, so I extend my [Magic Hand] there and put them into my Storage all at once.

"Master, the generals and officers are separated so I tell."

Nana who was next to the Evil Dragons, holding a horse-riding whip in

one hand while keeping watch informed me.
I invoke [Weariness Field] and [Mass Sleep] whose range is expanded by a wand to make all the empire's troops fall asleep.

"Master, are you going to make these people into slaves and sell them to Makiwa Kingdom?"
"I'm fine with that if they're thieves."

I shook my head to answer Liza's question.
As they have killed the country's lords, I have no doubt all of the demi-humans will be killed if I sell them to Makiwa Kingdom.

"I'll shut them in the Sub-space for now and release them once the time is right."
"You're soft as always~ It's better if you at least ask ransom from Weasel Empire you know."
"You're right, I'll think about it."

I agreed to Arisa's advice and started moving the captives.

I separate the common soldiers and the slave soldiers and send them to the Sub-spaces I own.
I will eventually send them back to Weasel Empire, but they'll probably do indecent things in Makiwa Kingdom if I release them here, so I'll imprison them here until I can open Gates in the empire.
There are agricultural land and dwelling houses inside the sub-space so even leaving them there for months is probably going to be fine.

Further, I send the 'Hyahha' human mercenaries to the [Wasteland] sub-space.
Once they're emotionally cornered, I'll put them into the agricultural area if they look like they can be reformed, if not then I'll take them to Makiwa Kingdom's prison.

I put the generals, officers and crew members of the modern weapons into the prison in the Blue Territory.
There are various things I have to ask them after all.

I sent back Arisa and the others to the solitary island palace, and then I ordered the Griffon Riders and the Evil Dragon family to bloodlessly suppress the remaining weasel empire troops who were stationed in the towns and cities to keep watch.

The aggressive war in this world is quite gruesome.

Several hundreds and thousands of soldiers' bodies are left in front of the cities, the bodies of noble-like and bureaucrat-like people are also swaying inside the cities.
I sent back my companions since I didn't want them to see these scenes but.... I didn't want to see it too if possible.

While feeling that it was too late, I put mosaic in my view with illusion magic and mechanically threw the captives of weasel empire into the sub-space.
There were several units who had escaped outside Makiwa Kingdom, but since the outside of Makiwa Kingdom is monster dominion stretching several kilometers wide, it seems they've become snacks for many monsters there.

◇

I served full course hamburg steak as promised for the dinner, but since I had no appetite, I finished with cold tofu and cold sake.

"Sorrowful hero isn't like your character you know?"

When I was gazing at the swaying palm trees from the palace's terrace dead at night, Arisa appeared with oden which let out vapor and warmed Dragon Spring sake on the tray.
It seems she didn't intend to drink them herself, she put it in front of me and then picked up a cup of cola while snacking on some hampen.

"You shouldn't drink cold things when you're feeling down. Since you'd feel sad enough you'd want to die with it--it's best to drink warm things, eat piping hot Oden, and make your body and mind lukewarm!"

As advised by Arisa I sip the hot sake.
From the warmth of the sake, the mellow aroma stimulates my nose.

Bite, I chew the daikon, and then the flavors of the daikon and dashi paint the inside of my mouth with the color of happiness.

The oden and the warm sake that fell into my stomach warm my body from inside.
I feel like crying somewhat even though I don't feel sad.

"Un, you look a bit better."

Arisa moves to the top of the handrail with short-range teleport and peek at my face.

"Master might be able to do everything, but that doesn't mean that master has to do everything okay?"

She said it jokingly, but Arisa's eyes were serious.

"Master's character is not suitable to be a ruler after all. The role of defeating demon lords as hero can't be helped but aside from that, isn't it fine to just be『I help them cause I don't want to abandon them』."

Those vaguely irresponsible lines aren't like Arisa.

"Unlike abandoned cats or abandoned dogs, they're people who have to live themselves. Save them when they can't do anything about it no matter what, after that they can manage somehow by themselves. Kings and nobles exist for that sake after all. They get the tax so they have to work, as in『<<Noblesse Oblige>>』isn't it."

I'm a noble for once though.

"Moreover, you know, if you help anything and everything, you'll gradually be corrupted and broke. Kindness is needed but excessive kindness is going to be poisonous. Master should just be whimsical without thinking too hard about it."

Arisa laughs with a joking tone.

"You're right--"

Sometimes saving people during the sightseeing, sometimes being a hero--having a stance like that looks good for my mental health.

I thank Arisa for cheering me up, call my companions who are peeking on the entrance with their heads looking like a totem pole, and treat ourselves with oden party under the night sky.

Together with everyone noisily like this is peaceful and nice.

14-46. War Kingdom (4) Interrogation

*

Satous' here. Interrogation changes with time. Interrogation which involved physical pain in the past has seemingly now become something that uses truth serum nowadays. Those are all something I learned from manga and movies though.

◇

"Now then, shall I have you answer my questions?"

After a slightly awkward breakfast, I began the weaselkin's officers interrogation.
The officer looks up at me who's wearing lizardkin suit with scornful eyes.

"Hmph, you think a soldier would easily leak information? This is why dumb lizards annoy me."
"As expected of the empire's soldier, truly excellent. Those magic beasts and tanks are also great."

The harsh words of the weaselkin gets converted in my brain as I talk to him with the [Weasel Language] that I just got.
It's hard to use the language with human's mouth so I use the usual [Ventriloquism] skill to help.

"That's exactly right! Bestowed by His Majesty the emperor, the invincible magic beast army trampled the knights, and the special vehicle corps crushed countless golems! Our Empire is truly unrivaled!"
"The speed of which you invaded Makiwa Kingdom cannot be compared to anything in the past."

"Of course! I cannot stand that bald tactician but that person is the only one that can materialize His Majesty's plan..."

I interrupt the officer, who's blabbering indiscreetly, at the right time to get the information I want.

I didn't use truth serum, it was the support from mind magic's [Honesty], [Speaker], [Foolish Field].
With the synergy of the skill [Interrogation] at max level and these magic, it's easy to make him talk about their secret.

"Hoo, what kind of plan is that? It must certainly be amazing isn't it?"
"Of course! The iron smoke car which connect cities will be used to transport goods and the soldiers to the front lines! With excellent logistics and magic beast corps as the key, and combined with the Magic Eater of the special vehicle unit, even Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire are nothing to us!"

The special vehicle should be about the tank.

The Magic Eater is probably the magic device which generate magic nullifying field that my companions reported.
We couldn't secure it in one piece, but I can understand its structure to a degree from the wreckage.
I must quickly make something to oppose it.

Still... The smoke car must be a steam locomotive right~.
According to Corpse of the labyrinth lower layer, advancing the civilization means violating the god's taboo, so why is the Weasel Empire fine?
I remember Corpse saying, "Radio tower and railroad network had brought upon the god's wrath."

I should ask his opinion abouot it once I'm done with the interrogation.

"By the way, are you aware of the god's taboo?"
"You really are a lizard. Repeating the same ignorant things as the priests said."

The officer grimaced unpleasantly like he was a child who had got enough of sermon.

"There is no taboo."
"--Really?"

To the officer who answered full of confidence, I make a face like I can't believe him to make him talk about the reason.

"It's been 10 years since the science began. God's wrath or whatever never befall us."

--It's already been such a long time?

He's saying that there is no divine punishment since it's not a taboo, however--.

"Did the empire advance science on the premise that the divine punishment wouldn't happen?"
"There is no way the great emperor would endanger his subject right? In order to see if it violated the taboo, we manipulated the rebels to create a puppet state, and then once we confirmed that it didn't violate the taboo, we brought it back to the empire."

I see, so they prepared a test site beforehand.
By the way, about that puppet state--Gufut Commonwealth isn't on the map of Shiga Kingdom's tourism book, not even the country's name remains in the related documents.
According to the officer, that puppet state was disposed of five years ago

since it bared its fangs to the empire.

"By the way, why did such a grand empire's army invaded mid countries like Makiwa Kingdom?"
"Hmph, you lizards are clueless."

After having an expression like "You don't even understand that?", the officer lost to the allure of talking and continues to talk.

"Of course it's for the Four Treasured Wands needed for His Majesty's plan and to field test the Magic Eater and the special vehicle."

Fumu, so Makiwa Kingdom's side guessed it right.

It seems three of the treasured wands were taken by the empire, but fortunately, we were able to secure one.
I was going to hand it over to its owner, Miss Shelmina Dasles, later, but it seems it's better for me to keep it.
If I carelessly return it, the empire might re-invade or send some unit to seize it, I don't want to let the sincere girl who doesn't look like she's related to the pyromaniac noble die a meaningless death.

I--Dragon Knight Outis should grandly show off that I have the wand and then I can just return it to Miss Shelmina after some time.
I have to be careful as to not put the brunt of the attack to Silga Kingdom.

Now then, the interrogation went smoothly as such but there were some who were quite stubborn among the officers.

"Empire Army's Western Force, ID number I-0700835, Iscast Tol Usantokujo."

The weaselkin officer stated as if he was a US military captive.
After that he shut his mouth like he has finished his duty.

This officer who was the Wheel Chief of the scientific special vehicle unit isn't talking at all.
Looks like he's the type on which mind magic is hardly effective.

--Can't be helped, I'll use my trump card.

I waved my hand to give the signal, and then the excellent cold-blooded torturers showed up from the door.
They're gripping well-used torture apparatus in their hands.

"Let's start the interrogation."

The smiling torturers started their performance.

"Kocho kocho~?"
"How far can you endure it I wonder~?　Nanodesu!"

Tama quickly took off the officer's sturdy boots, and Pochi who was carrying a handmade feather duster began to skilfully tickle him.
We didn't have to wait long before he surrendered while laughing.

We didn't get much new information even with Tama and Pochi's dedication though.
Due to the first officer who chattered a lot, the new information we got from the rest weren't much.

The new information are--

Weasel Empire has closed trading with other foreign countries, they're only doing it with Dejima Island which has a labyrinth.
Science has spread on more than half of the 21 states.
The royal prince is staying in Dejima Island as a foreign diplomat.
The emperor never shows his face among the people, only a part of the

senate are acquainted with him.

--Only as such.

Further, I got more information about the tactician from the elite who boarded the biplane.
Half of the army detest the tactician while there's a fixed number who worship the person.
The tactician is wearing hooded robe and a mask, their body line and voice are such that it can't be determined whether they are a woman or a man.
The origin is unknown, it's not clear whether they are a human or a fairykin, according to the rumor the emperor brought them out of nowhere 10 years ago.
It appears the tactician is the emperor's favorite, he called them [Touya] intimately.

....The name sounds like a Japanese.

I can't be sure of it though since the illegitimate child of the previous Shiga King was also named Souya.

Come to think of it, even though I know that their names are of their previous life because the gods name them, why do the reincarnated people are all Japanese?
Oh right, the Heroes were also all Japanese.

Are the gods here partial to Japanese people?

◇

"--I don't know no god's thinking."

At the labyrinth lower layer's palace which I haven't visited for a long time, I consulted about the Weasel Empire to Corpse the King Mummy, and he replied back coldly.

"Oy oy, Corpse. Ya shouldn't be that cold to the boy who relied on the rustle-rustle you y'know?"
"Sorry for being rustle-rustle. Aren't ya clang-clang too though."

Hearing Armor the Iron Stalker's mediation, Corpse glanced at me after joking with him.

"The way gods do things are relatively haphazard. There is no clear standard. It's like『I don't like it so I hit it』or something like that."

He makes the god sounds like [a spoiled child who grew up being pampered].

"During the frequent happening of disasters when I made radio towers and railroad, I heard that it was『God's Divine Punishment』from the priest, but I never exchanged words with god myself."
"Hyo? Didn't you threaten the god with the nuclear bomb?"
"I negotiated with the『Oracle Miko』after doing a little demonstration in a monster's dominion ya see. Gods never once showed themselves despite their big talk, and I only ever fought with the Nopperabou god's apostles so I couldn't have a conversation."

--So apostles are [Faceless (Nopperabou)] huh. <TLN: Nopperabou can mean featureless, but it's also the name of an apparition with no face from Japanese folktales.>

Further, even though the god's apostles weren't that strong, his attacks couldn't work on them so he dealt with them using sealing-type magic tools and magic.

"Hey it's Kuro! You should come and say hello to me too if you visit!"

The one who intruded with noisy voice was a charming beauty with wavy black hair and pale skin.
She's a greater vampire who lives in the labyrinth's lower layer--Vampire Princess Semeri.

"Is Shin doing well?"
"Ou! I'm disciplining him with Armor y'see."

Semeri smiles brightly unlike a vampire would.
Apparently, the former artificial demon lord and a local hero, Shin boy is reforming well.

Semeri shamelessly began to put her hands on the dishes and liquors from many countries that I had bought as souvenirs.

"Oy, Semeri, don't eat them all."

Armor reproved her.
It seems they can take in and enjoy consumables despite being undeads.

Corpse only drinks the liquor, he rarely touches the dishes.

"Kuro, gods are whimsical. I only know this from reading ancient slates and documents, but it seems they've been destroying cities and countries through disasters and divine punishments until around 20.000 years ago."

Yup, I knew.
I heard such story from the matter of the Shadow Castle.

"They've been quiet recently since monsters and demon lords are acting as

the disasters, but the gods here are fundamentally different than the 『Kind Gods』 and 『Guardian Gods』 that we Japanese are familiar with. Think of them as relatives of the nasty demon lords."

Corpse muttered in a way only I could heard during the party.
I etch the special advice in my mind.

Further, since Corpse shared about the magic spell and the magic tool he used to seal the apostles to me, I think I can do something about it even if the divine punishment spreads outside the Weasel Empire.

I stopped by the Castle of Perpetual Night in labyrinth's lower layer when I was going back and delivered the 『Lesseu's Blood』 wine to the True Ancestor Ban, he gave me some Blood Spheres as thanks. I was running low on it so I'm really glad.
I also visited Goblin Princess Yuika while I was at it and presented her with various products from my travel, it also served as thanks for putting up the barrier on the solitary island palace.

The Nukazuke I got from Yuika when I was returning was more well-received by the hikikomori demon lord Shizuka than Arisa and Hikaru.
I think having Nukazuke as the tea-cake is quite refined.

◇

"So the Weasel Empire was really aiming for the Four Treasured Wands!"

I disguised myself as Dragon Knight Outis once again and went to Makiwa Kingdom's royal castle to tell the truth.
I've visited the refugee camp and told the situation to Miss Shelmina before I came here, she has agreed to entrust me with the Crimson Wand.

"Fortunately, I have the Crimson Wand with me."
"Oo! Good work defending it to the end! His Excellency Dasles truly has good eyes for people!"

The prime minister who saw Miss Shelmina holding the Crimson Wand stretched out his hand as if he was going to snatch the wand from her. Miss Shelmina backs away to avoid that hand.

"In order to prevent re-invasion of the empire, I have decided to entrust this Crimson Wand to Outis-sama."
"F-fool! Giving Makiwa Kingdom's most valuable asset to someone of unknown origin--"

Hearing Miss Shelmina's remark, the young king made a verbal slip.

"Crimson Wand is the treasure of Marquis Dasles House. Until Uncle--Marquis Dwot Dasles comes back, I've promised Outis-sama to leave Crimson Wand in his care."
"How are you going to defend the east! If the weasels invade again, isn't Dasles Territory going to be the foremost to bear the attack!"

The young rattled on, but there's no way the person concerned didn't think of it.

"King, there is no need to worry. Outis-dono has offered to lend four guardian golems in the shape of『Flame Dragon』,『Blazing Giant』,『Fire Lizard』, and『Phoenix』."

Four level 50 class golems should be enough for defense.
I made all of them besides the Blazing Giant using golem creation spell furnished with Magic Cores, I created the Blazing Giant using a complex method I learned in the elf village.

The Blazing Giant is equipped with a structure to cope with the [Magic

Eater] inside.
Just in case the golem's AI stopped, I've loaded it with a remote control function using a primitive electronic circuit which I made by analyzing the cell phone I had and Lost Knowledge skill, but it's probably unnecessary.
The supply of magic power from the [Philosopher's Stone] to the golem is stronger than the magic essence (mana) draining force of the weaselkin's [Magic Eater] from the surrounding, so the golem that uses the [Philosopher's Stone] as its core should not stop moving.

"O-Outis-dono, not only in Dasles territory, please put golems in the royal capital too--"
"I don't mind of course."
"--R-really!"

I've expected this.

"However, I require 100.000 gold coins for each one of them."

The king's smile freezes to hear me.
I don't mind providing the ones that can be made with the spell for free, but they will stop moving if the weasels use the [Magic Eater].

There were some slightly troublesome dialogs after this, but since I was under no obligation to compromise, I had the king and the territory governors to work hard for the country's revival.
Of course they have to fulfill my reward, that is supporting the people who were chased out of their lands.

◇

"Outis-sama, are you leaving already?"

"Yeah, the next battlefield is calling for me."

Miss Shelmina sounds strangely amorous.
Does she likes lizard's face even though she's a human?

"Stay healthy."
"--Yes. I will bring every one who has been saved by Outis-sama back without missing any."

I brushed away my mantle with a thud, rode on the Evil Dragon son's back and flew away.

Once the Evil Dragon son ascended enough to be unseen from the ground, we moved to the labyrinth's lower layer - Evil Dragon area with Unit Arrangement.
For some reason, this area has fallen under my rule.

"You've done good. Here's your reward. Share it with your family."

As thanks for the Evil Dragon parents, I put a truck-sized cut block of the whale meat.
The savory smell of the grilling meat which has been put on the bedrock heated by lava spreads.

--GWLORWN.
--LURWOORWN.
--GWLORORROO.

Yup, the Evil Dragon parents look happy.
Starting with the Evil Dragon son who couldn't wait anymore and bit the half-roasted whale meat, the other Evil Dragons also scrambled and began to enjoy the whale meat.

After watching them for a little, I transformed into Kuro and went to

Echigoya Firm.

It's to arrange the refugee transportation.
Even though Miss Shelmina said it as she did, from the refugee camp to Dasles Territory is dozens of kilometers away, so some of the refugees are probably going to be lost if they keep at it as is.

"Kuro-sama! Two large airships have successfully departed!"

When I came into Echigoya Firm's office room with Unit Arrangement, Manager drew closer on me with eyes that were more dazzling than usual.
Tifaliza's eyes are colder than usual somehow.

"Thank you, Manager."
"....Manager."

--Huh?

Manager's tension is dropping fast, perhaps the thanks weren't enough.
As I thought, it should not be just with words, I have to also present her with goods.

I've already given her an amulet, a wand and also a [Magic Bag].

"Manager, do you like sweets?"
"Y-yes. Like everyone else."

Fumu, I'll give her handmade sweets as the token of appreciation.

"I-isn't this the phantom『Lulu Shortcake』!"
"I baked it myself, do eat it during your break."
"Ku-Kuro-sama's handmade!"

Manager is staring at the cake while posing like she's praying to heaven.
Looks like she's gotten back to good mood.

"--Elterina, me too."
"I know. But, keep it a secret from the girls okay? Those girls don't know restraint."
"Understood."

Manager and Tifaliza are exchanging secret talks in whispers.
Glad to see them getting along well.

I wait for the two to finish their talk and make the arrangement for the alibi and the transportation plan.

14-47. Follow-up Processing

*

Satou's here. Ending things are several times harder than starting things. It's not only once or twice I thought of having someone else to do the last debug. I wonder where the utopia without debug is located....

◇

"Well well, you're Sir Pendragon aren't you?"
"White hair with a cut on the cheek--You must be Kuro-dono of Echigoya Firm right."

I'm doing this farce in the royal castle of Tonaoku Kingdom, a small kingdom located next to Silga Kingdom.
Kuro who was visiting to thank for the permission to open the branch office accidentally met Satou doll who were together with the entourages, and then they had a chat.

Since we're in the hall leading to the audience chamber, the eyes and ears of the people of Tonaoku Kingdom are gathered to us.

"Let me borrow your ears for a bit--"
"What! Weasel Empire invaded Makiwa Kingdom!"

Using Amplification skill, Kuro's loud voice reaches all the nooks and corners of the royal castle.

"--Kuro-dono, please lower your voice slightly."
"Oh sorry! Even if there's Silga Kingdom inbetween, this matter is not unrelated to Tonaoku Kingdom. Have you informed Tonaoku King?"
"Not yet, I'm going to after this. I've stopped by precisely to inform the

matter."

The people in the surrounding look anxious.
Since a person who looked like the errand of the king showed up from the interior door, I move the farce forward to end it.

"However, please do not worry--"
"Hou? The dragon knights of the『Dragon Valley』went there huh! That's splendid! However, my master would reprove me if I didn't at least help transporting the refugees."
"That's reassuring. Please give my best regards to Hero Nanashi-sama."
"Understood, I have come here to pay my gratitude to Tonaoku king who's given the permission to open a branch office here, however I'll leave such thing to the branch manager, I'm going back to accomplish my duty as the Hero's servant."

In order to finish the farce, I create white smoke and disappear from the place like a ninja.
Secretly changing places with Satou doll is quite easy then.

I tell my entourages that I've changed places with Satou doll with eye contacts.
It seems only Lady Karina acting as Lady K after a long while who hasn't noticed.
There's no particular problem with that anyway, so I'll leave her as is.

"He disappeared?"
"So that was the rumored Elusive Kuro-dono of Echigoya Firm."
"As expected of a hero's servant."

The bar for being a [Hero's servant] has raised somehow, but since the story is an embellishment of the people who created the rumor, I guess there's no harm done.

After creating witnesses, I quickly ended my audience with the king, used the gift I brought, [Chestnuts of Land and Sea], to dispel the anxious mood and relished on Tonaoku Kingdom's specialties in the banquet.

This is a small kingdom located between Shiga Kingdom and the Wyvern Kingdom--Silga Kingdom, it's also next to the Black Dragon Mountains, but there were many more uncommon dishes than I thought that I enjoyed.
There were variety of dishes developed from substitute foodstuff like nuts and wild plants, there was even a mysterious dish made from pickled moss pine skin, but the bean sake of Tonaoku Kingdom was especially good. Every one of them has complex flavor, it's interesting.

While lightly ignoring the marriage proposals from the artless Tonaoku Kingdom's nobles, I got to know many specialty dishes of the kingdom.
I'm going to secretly visit the place with everyone as commoners once we depart after the formal tour is over.
I can't really enjoy this relaxedly before finishing the plan to transport the refugees.

◇

"Kuro-dono, what happened to the entire crews of the warships!"
"Don't worry, I'll bring them back safely--"

After making them fell sleep, I sent the crew members of the two Shiga Kingdom's large warships to the underground camp of Echigoya Firm in Royal Capital.
Going with them will be bad in many things since I plan to move the warships to the border between Makiwa Kingdom and Silga Kingdom with Unit Arrangement.

"--I expect great work from you."
"""YES"""

I leave the interior decoration to the brownies as I do the final tuning of the unfinished aerodynamic engines.
Since I completed it in less than half a day, I brought the two warships to the destination with Unit Arrangement in turns.

I had prepared heavy fog using the spirit [Misty Fog] beforehand, so there was no problem even if two large airships appeared out of nowhere.

"The weaselkin flying units are coming!"
"R-run away! Escape into the mountain!"

--Oops, I should have announced beforehand.

"We're from Echigoya Firm of Shiga Kingdom. By the request of the representative of Marquis Dasles, Dame Shelmina, we are to transport you. Please prepare for departure calmly. I repeat--"

I gave names that would calm the refugees through the external speaker to clear the misunderstanding.

"Da-Dasles-sama?"
"Oh good, the young lady is safe."
"Isn't Dasles the great lord of the east?"
"Yeah, if it's that man, he would even use his private funds to move Shiga Kingdom."

U~n, I wonder.
Was the pyromaniac noble originally a splendid noble?

My impression of him is that he's a troublesome noble who has lost his sanity from grudges, but to think it's this different just from a different

perspective.
I'm intrigued with the things that happened between the time of the pyromaniac noble that I know and Marquis Dasles that they are familiar with.
According to the weaselkin's Wheel Chief, Weasel Empire's army was quite cautious with Marquis Dasles, they might have done something to turn [Marquis Dasles into a pyromaniac noble].

It might be a good idea to be cautious with the Tactician when we visit Weasel Empire.

Since the refugees weren't all from one city, I ended up transporting them to many places.
I crammed them into the airships and carried them after making them asleep.

It was easy since I had created several base points for Unit Arrangement in Makiwa Kingdom.
It unexpectedly became a practice for transporting immigrants from Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital to Muno Earldom.

◇

"So you're Kuro of Shiga Kingdom huh. Rumors about you reach even here."

I stopped by Silga Kingdom as Kuro after I was done transporting the refugees.
Under the pretext of flying large warships near the kingdom.

My real intention is to ask the true intention of the weasel merchant, who's inside Silga Kingdom's underground prison, as to why he was

meddling with Shadow Castle in Rumooku Kingdom, the country of the pink-haired Princess Menea.

"I've heard that you specializes in doing shady businesses that Hero Nanashi can't."

I don't know no shady businesses.
They're fundamentally good deeds you know?

"Are you paying the weaselkin merchant who did a grave sin out of the prison for the sake of such shady business?"

--Grave sin?

In a world where people's live worth almost nothing, killing someone is never called a [Grave sin].
I wonder what did the weasel merchant do to get him caught?

Strangely enough, the weasel merchant's Offense status is white.
Perhaps he was caught on false charge?

The one who told me the answer was the Macho Warrior who broke in.

"King! Is it true that you're going to release the fools who intruded the sanctuary of dragons-sama!"
"It's still under negotiation. Step back unless you're interested in becoming the next king."
"Gu, gununu."

Handled by the experienced king, Macho Warrior groans in vexation.

"One airship. I won't ask for the big one. Just one like the small airship that Viscount Pendragon rides on."
"Outrageous. It's totally unbalanced compared to the life of one weaselkin

merchant."

I can make a private airship's aerodynamic engine immediately and I have plenty of the material needed for it, however, since Shiga Kingdom has asked me not to sell them outside the kingdom, I refused the king.
Silga king probably isn't demanding an airship for real, it's probably a light check before the actual negotiation.

"Then what would be balanced?"

I don't want to do troublesome transaction since I'm not a professional merchant.
I'll go with something that will make Silga Kingdom immediately agrees and has little influence in foreign countries.

"--How about a ship that can be used on the wetlands?"
"How disappointing, Kuro of Echigoya Firm. The fact that you have manufactured large airships for Shiga Kingdom is known even by spies of a rural kingdom y'know."

It appears the Silga King didn't like my reply, he glared ferociously.
Please don't snap back before I could finish explaining the ship.

"Do you not like ship? Perhaps it can't be compared to a wyvern, but it's a high-speed craft which makes use of wind magic device y'know?"

It's a magic ship called Wind Ship modeled after the hovercraft that can operate in wetlands in modern earth.
It needs littler magic power compared to an airship, and an aquatic hovercraft similar to this one has also been deployed in Oyugock Kingdom for emergency contact use.

After glaring at each other for a bit, he was pleased with the Wind Ship when he saw it himself, and agreed to get the weasel merchant released.

And then, when we tried it on-site--.

"Ooh, this is great! It's sliding over the wetland's reeds!"
"Truly! Wind Ship is truly the right name for it!"
"WOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

--From the beginning to the end, it was a big hit for the king and the prince.

The Macho Warrior who was smiling till the end was noisy, but now he's probably going to overlook the weasel merchant with this.

"By the way Kuro-dono. The ones who broke into the sanctuary were not only the weaselkin merchant, there were also a male rabbitkin slave and a female human slave you see. If you want to save them, give another Wind Ship--"
"I don't mind if the negotiation breaks down. I will withdraw, taking the Wind Ship with me."
"Wa-wait! Forgive the prince's impertinence. We will give you the slaves as an apology."

I tried to take an attitude as supported by [Negotiation] skill when the prince was trying to ask for another Wind Ship, the king restrained with great force.

--He likes the magic driven hovercraft that much huh.

"Fumu, I won't say no if you're willing to. Then it's a deal, King of Silga."

After getting the Wind Ship's startup key, he took along the queen and their children toward the port in high spirits.

◇

"Are you the great criminal who trespassed the dragon sanctuary and tried to destroy Silga Kingdom?"

When I called out to him, the emaciated weasel merchant quickly jumped to the prison's lattice.

"Human? Judging from your speech, you're a Shiga Kingdom's man right? I want to make a deal."
"Do you wish to be freed? What can you give in return? I'll say it beforehand, I have no interest in money or women."
"My family has a seat in the senate, you can demand anything you want. I can grant you most things you see."

I thought he was just a merchant, but it seems his family is quite prestigious.

"Right then, I demand three things. What were you plotting in Rumooku Kingdom? That's one of--"
"Shadow Castle's investigation. I needed to know whether the sentries of god were really there. Don't ask me what for. It was a request of my uncle who's in the senate. I don't know the details. It would be quite an achievement if I were to get magic tools from the age of gods, but the Saga Empire's adventurers seemed to have failed."

The weasel merchant gave information quite readily.
I haven't even used mind magic's [Honesty], [Speaker], and [Foolish Field]--.

"--You're quite eager to talk."
"There's no point in keeping it a secret here. I don't know what kind of foresights His Majesty the Emperor has, but living creatures are ones who

put importance on their safety above all. There is no need to weigh my options even if it's something that involves the life and death of the empire."

I did think that they were a selfish and rational species, but it's quite extreme.

"Then, my second demand. Why did you sneak into the dragon sanctuary?"
"I wanted to employ the people from the Silga Branch and Silga Kingdom's crime guilds, but everyone shrunk back, saying『We're afraid of the dragon's wrath』, so I had no choice but to go myself."

Fumu, the people of Silga Kingdom revered them as gods, so it's understandable.

"Don't dodge the question. I asked not『Why are you』but『What is your purpose』for going into the dragon sanctuary."
"You did huh, so the criticism I felt in your words was just my imagination. My purpose was simple. I sought dragon's scales for my company's profit, and searched for fallen dragon's claw and fang as requested by my uncle."

I know that there demands for lesser dragon's scales since they can be used to make lesser version of holy tools.
However, [The request of the uncle] who belongs to the [Weasel Empire Senate] huh....

"What are you going to use dragon's claws and fangs for?"
"There is no point to the question. What can they be used for for anything but weapons. Are you telling me to use dragon fang as a cutting tool?"

The weasel merchant spits as if sneering.

However, that may be unexpectedly possible. The dragon fang that [Penetrates All] is very useful to whittle super hard metal.
I have the fang of the lesser dragon after all, might as well use it as a lathe tool.

"Then, my last demand. I want to meet the emperor. Mediate between us."
"W-with the emperor eh--"

The weasel merchant stiffens after hearing me.
Arranging a meeting between a suspicious man and the one who holds the most power in the empire should be quite difficult.

"--Can it be with His Excellency royal prince instead? That person is in Dejima Island as a diplomat, so I should be able to arrange a meeting with him if I ask my uncle."

It seems I can meet that one normally, so there's no need to ask for a mediation.
Leaving that aside, shouldn't the honorary title of a royal prince be 'His Highness'?

"There's no point if it isn't with the emperor."
"Are you scheming to assassinate him? It's useless even if you can meet him. The Temple Knight of the Imperial Castle is filled with knights that even Shiga Eight Swords are no match against."

Temple Knight huh, the name seems strong.

"Simply put, you have to be at least level 50 to become a holy knight of the Temple Knight. And there are 100 of that kind of knight. Even if you're outside the norm as a hero's servant, you'll just be crushed to death by the sheer number."

--That's amazing.

Where did they get that much experience point?
The life span of weaselkin should be lower than humans', can they really train that many people in just one labyrinth?

That aside, I'd like to refrain from having power inflation like in a manga with declining popularity.
Our girls are stronger, but since instant death techniques and tools exist, I can't be at peace.
Maybe I should make new equipment without restraint....

"I'll say this again, give up with the assassination."
"Nonsense. I do not plot to kill the emperor. Do you know smoke car? I only want to talk about that."
"--Smoke car? What's that? Are you going to promote your product?"

Strange.... There's no need for him to play dumb about the train now, and there's no way someone of his position never saw the smoke car....

Come to think of it, even if I have few contacts with weaselkin, I've never heard any rumor about the smoke car.
Perhaps, by using [Geass] or other skill and magic to impose gag order, they delete or bind memories regarding things that can't be brought outside the empire.

I add that concern in the memo pad for weaselkin of my menu.

"You don't need to know the content of my talk with the emperor. It's over if the other party refuses. I don't care if the empire is destroyed by the god's wrath, but it'll be troubling if we get dragged up so I only want to meet to talk about that."

I've said most of the things, but since it looks like he'll laugh it out if I talk about the taboo and such, this much information is enough.

"Even if it's not comparable to my own safety, I do have some attachment to my motherland. Moreover, even if by any chance the emperor is assassinated, that just means His Excellency royal prince will replace him.... Very well, the cheerful royal prince who's easy with business and diplomacy is more convenient than the emperor who dislike other people."

Like I said, I'm not going to assassinate him....

"I vow that I will strive to arrange the meeting with the emperor...."
"I can't put any trust in your vow, I'll have it in a written contract."
"Very well--"

I take out a parchment from Item Box and sign a contract with the weasel merchant.

"You haven't written the penalty for not fulfilling the term within the promised time."
"Kuh, you're good for a human...."

Such was one dispute during the contract writing.
The experience I got when I accompanied Mr. Overweight who was the project leader to sign a contract with the client was made useful.

◇

"So this is freedom--"

The weasel merchant stretched his body while still wearing prison uniform outside the castle.

A robust rabbitkin man appeared.
He's the former slave of the weasel merchant.

"Yo, boss. I'll take you to Dejima Island for 100 gold coins, how about it."
"Uzahi, you weren't executed?"
"Yea, looks like I was saved by the human over there."

The weasel merchant sent an asking glance at me.

"You'll need transportation right."

The price of the confiscated tamed wyvern was a bit steep, but it's something needed.

"My uncle in the imperial capital needs to make a move in order to fulfill the promise. I want three, no, two month time. Once the preparation is complete, I'll send a messenger to the office of Norouino Firm in Dejima Island."
"Okay. I be waiting for good news in Dejima Island."

The rabbitkin who sensed that our talk was over blows a whistle to call his wyvern.
Before long, a wyvern lands, the two rides on it and then they make a long run before the gate.
While they were only glancing at the screaming fleeing people, it flew and then went to the south-east direction after circling the sky twice.

The next time we meet, it's probably going to be in the Weasel Empire.

"You sure you don't want to go?"
"It's OK."

I call the woman who was watching from the shadow.
Like the rabbitkin man, she was a slave of the weasel merchant.

She only has [Item Box] skill even though her level is at late 20.
Of course, all of the contents inside the Item Box have been confiscated by Silga Kingdom.

"If you have no place to go, do you want to go to ours?"
"Echigoya Firm?"
"That's right."
"Then, I'll go. Employ me."

Looks like she's not from Shiga Kingdom, her words are disjointed.

"What's your name?"
『Safe』

Oy, weasel merchant.... don't call her 'safe' in weasel language.

"Do you have a name before you became a slave?"
"Myu."
"■■ Name Order, Myu."

I change her name back.

Thus, Myu got a job as a new treasurer of Echigoya Firm.
Looks like she's going to get along well with Tifaliza as fellow taciturn.

For some reason, Manager treated Myu harshly, but after a while, her attitude became normal with her.

--[Getting along well with each others is a beautiful thing] isn't it.

◇

"Sharu, I'm counting on you to take care of this girl okay?"
"Yes, Kuro-sama. Uwaa, can I really have this much travel expense?"
"I don't mind. You can replenish the fund in Echigoya branch offices along the way, I also don't mind if you donate them to poor villages or churches."

I hand over a bag with 50 gold coins to the former chivalrous phantom thief now working as a trade member of Echigoya Firm, Sharururuun.
There wasn't much she had to do as a phantom thief in the Royal Capital, so I asked her to become the fake apostle Kei's teacher.

I feel that a type of person like Kei would rebel against hot-blooded type like Armor or straight type like Arisa and Hikaru, so I picked Sharururuun who was doing good deeds even while dirtying her hands as she walked the outlaw road.

"Let's go, Kei."
"U-un."

Kei who's wearing a brown wig is looking at Satou doll with eyes like that of an abandoned cat.
I felt slightly guilty seeing such face, but she needs re-education. I'll be an ogre here and send her off.

"Kei, be careful with injuries and monsters okay. Sharu-san, please take care of Kei."
"Leave it to me, Sir Pendragon."

Sharururuun sticks out her chest to answer Satou doll.

They departed with Sharururuun pulling Kei's hand.
Tracing back her path as a fake apostle, she's going to walk as a normal traveler this time.

I actually knew several means to collect prayers in order to revive God Zaikuon, but since I felt that pushing the answer to her would be wrong, I restrained myself.

"--Kuro-sama, then I'll be leaving too."
"I've talked with Sharururuun so be careful not to be found out by Kei only."
"Understood."

Two women traveling together would be easy targets for bad people so I've added the former phantom thief, now Echigoya Firm's slave, Pipin to support them just in case.

After sending them off and going back to the Royal Capital with Unit Arrangement, I changed to Hero Nanashi form and conveyed the matter about Weasel Empire and taboo to Shiga King and the prime minister.

It looks like the problem with taboo hasn't been actualized yet in Weasel Empire, but I'll be visiting the Imperial Capital after getting the appointment for the meeting in two months and talk about the taboo with the emperor.

Let's continue doing various experiments and creating magic tools which, were stopped at time, in these two months.
I absolutely need to meet the ancient dragon who's on another continent, I also need to continue the development plan of the floating continent, the more things I can do, the more things I have to do like an exponential graph.

--Right!

Making weasel suits and then infiltrating Weasel Empire to sightsee the science sounds nice as well.

14-Intermission 1: Ancient Dragon Continent and Primeval Magic

*

Satou's here. Perhaps due to the influence from picture books and foreign anime geared toward children, when I think of magic, I imagine an old magician using a wand and invoking a spell. It was denied by a friend who was experienced in fantasy from home console though.

◇

『So this place is that continent?』

I asked my fellow traveler while surveying the wasteland that spread in front of us.

『That Ancient Dragon guy should be around here somewhere. That wasteland over there must have been what left after Ancient Dragon's Breath of 『Ruination』』

Black Dragon Heiron who's carrying me to the south continent keeps his confidence.

Whoa, looks like we're going to come out of the marine area into the south continent area soon.
This continent doesn't have a World Tree so this is the first time I've come here.

I acquire the information about the south continent area with [All Map Exploration].

Looks like the acquired map is for the northern half part of the continent.
The map's name is [Wasteland of Ancient Dragon], there's only a small number of people with only a few villages and small towns along the eastern and western coasts.

Looks like the Ancient Dragon is rowdier than I thought.

『Heiron, fly a bit to the right toward that mountain ridge you can see far away.』
『Your eyes are good Kuro. It's too far I cannot see it.』

Well I also can't see it you know.
I have him flying toward the point reflected on the map.

--Crisis Perception.

In accordance to my bad feeling, I create a square shaped magic shield using advanced force magic in front of Black Dragon.
The surface area of the protection is small, but it's an excellent little thing that could directly defend against Black Dragon's breath many times.

『What's wrong, Kuro--』

Heiron suddenly made a sharp turn to the left when he was still talking.
My view inclined nearly 90 degree.

Something sparkled from afar, and then at the next moment, a black jet passed through near Black Dragon's stomach.
It's probably the Ancient Dragon's breath.

The other party shouldn't have been able to see us from this distance, it must have shot it using perception.
Still, that's some tremendous range.

With a roaring sound, Heiron let out a breath toward the Ancient Dragon. Maybe it was a retaliation, but Heiron's breath disappeared in the middle of the way before even arriving at the Ancient Dragon.

『Fumu, now that Ancient Dragon guy should notice me too.』

After saying that, Heiron corrects his direction.
Rather, I feel that it was a declaration of war.

◇

--In the end, Heiron's act was the right thing to do.

After using the breath to reply, there was no more breath coming from Ancient Dragon.
Before long, we could see the Ancient Dragon lying sprawled on the mountain's ridge.

--Huge.

The ancient dragon in Fujisan mountains was already twice as big as a true dragon, yet this Ancient Dragon is an order of magnitude bigger. Its length is at least one kilometer. It looks like it'll be 20% longer if the dragon stretches its body.

How does a living being maintain such size I wonder, but it's probably of something magical.

The Ancient Dragon is basking in the sunlight, its crimson scales are glittering.

『Black Dragon the wild kid huh, wait until the afternoon if you want to have a match. Today is a fine day to take a nap. Fighting is nice, but having a pleasant nap is even better.』
『Umu, agreed.』

Heiron agreed with the Ancient Dragon who spoke with very low frequency sound which shook your body, then he landed on a ridge near the Ancient Dragon and began to sunbathe.
How do I say this, they really are on their own paces.

I came here to ask the Ancient Dragon to teach me after all, as they said 'when in Rome, do as Romans do', thus I decided to take a nap together with the dragons.
There were cold strong wind like in alpine and intense sunlight like in the southern region, but I was able to adjust them making them feel like comfortable wind and sunshine by wrapping my body with light magic power.

I open my eyes when I feel someone's gaze.
According to the clock on the menu it's been two hours.

Right in front of me, there's the face of the Ancient Dragon and its ruby-colored eyes that's bigger than me.

『--Are you Riui?』
『No, I am Kuro.』

I remember this Riui that the Ancient Dragon mentioned.
The founder king of Silga Kingdom should be called Riui.

Perhaps the legend of King Riui I heard in Silga Kingdom's Dragon Shrine is a historical fact.
I'm intrigued as to whether the suspicious story about dragon turning into human is true.

At least the Silga Kingdom's dragon weapons were of lesser dragons'.

『I see--』

Looks like the Ancient Dragon lost its interest in me after I denied the question, after blinking once, it turned its attention toward Black Dragon.

『--Should we fight now, Black Dragon?』
『I have obtained a name, Heiron. Call me Heiron instead of Black Dragon.』

The battle junkie Black Dragon snapped at the matter about his name rather than about the match.

『Hou? Did Dragon God-sama bestowed you the name?』

Oh? They normally get it from the Dragon God huh?
Come to think of it, Black Dragon didn't name himself even though he has Naming skill.

『No, my name was given by Kuro. I also gave Kuro his name y'know.』
『You got your name from a human child?』
『Umu, Kuro exchanged blows with me in equal term y'know.』
『Exchanged blows you said? Fighting a dragon by exchanging blows in close combat rather than using magic from afar, that's quite an admirable youngster.』

Ancient Dragon laughs out loud pleasantly.
Since its laughter is like a shockwave attack, please leave it at that.

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『So, you're not going to fight?』
『Umu, I'm fine with fighting, but I've brought Kuro here cause he has some business with you.』

Black Dragon told our original business faithfully to the Ancient Dragon who looked eager to fight.
It seems like he's already satisfied since he fought with me plentifully the other day.

Ancient Dragon turned its line of sight toward me uninterestingly.

『I had heard that Ancient Dragon-dono excels at ancient magic, so I'd like to learn from you once.』
『Fumu, I do not mind, however.... Magic (majutsu) is faster in invocation and needs less magic power than Primeval Magic (mahou) y'know?』

I answered the Ancient Dragon who looked wondering.
According to AR reading, the Ancient Dragon doesn't have [Primeval Magic] skill.

『Teach him without grumbling over the trivia. We're having a banquet after you teach him the magic.』
『Fumu, drinking Black Dragon liquor after a long while is nice too.』
『Besides, the dishes Kuro makes are tasty y'know.』
『Hou--better than whole roasted goats?』

So Ancient Dragon also uses goats as the standard?
They like goats too much.

『Fumwu.... About the same.』

Black Dragon concluded so after thinking hard about it for a bit.
Looks like even the whale meat with the spicy mayonnaise couldn't win

against the demi-glaced roasted goat.

It got derailed a bit like such, but the Ancient Dragon's lesson finally starts.

『Primeval magic is all about spirit.』

With just that, the Ancient Dragon shuts its mouth as if it has told everything.

『Do you mean using magic with thought?』
『Roughly like that. Desire for something strongly, and make it happen using magic power and spirit.』

That's quite a lackadaisical magic.

『Is there no need for spell and prior-preparation?』
『That's magic (majutsu) right? Don't you want to learn about Primeval Magic (mahou)?』

Apparently, Primeval Magic is really a magic that create phenomenons only with imagination.

『I'm hungry y'know....』
『Now that you mention it, I feel hungry too.』

Black Dragon and Ancient Dragon said those things even though the lesson had just started.
These guys really do things as they please.

『Experience is the best teacher. I'll show how it's done, imitate it.』

The Ancient Dragon stares at a rock.
Looks like it's going to do something with that rock.

I motivate myself and observe the process.
I can see the magic flow of enormous magic essence (mana). It seems the spirits aren't moving.

There's nothing happening even after 10 minutes.

However, the amount of magic power gathered on the rock is substantial. There's at least enough magic power to cast several advanced magic spells that's wrapped on the rock.

『I'll get some fish and octopus from the sea for a bit.』

Black Dragon yawned and then he went toward the shore.
Seafood from an unknown place sound good, but I have to concentrate on the Ancient Dragon's Primeval Magic right now.

After about an hour, Black Dragon came back while carrying a huge squid-shaped Kraken and a Deep Sea Serpent.

『What, not yet huh--this is why I dislike Primeval Magic.』

It's true that this can't be used as attack magic if it takes this long.

--Crack.

A small sound entered my ears.

I turned around and saw the figure of a sheep emerging from the transparent white rock.
Its realness accelerates as the rock as big as an arm turns into a statue of goat.

However, it doesn't end with just that--.

The statue's fur became tinged with real-looking fur, the statue's eyes blinked, turning into a living creature's eyes.

I reflexively stretch out my hand.
The fur that my hand touches feels exactly the same as a goat's.

——MWEEEE。

The goat cried once and then it began to walk.
Its first few steps were awkward, but it's hopping normally now.

Amazingly, even the AR reading shows that it's a [Goat].

『This is Primeval Magic. You understand?』
『Y-yes, thank you very much.』

It's strange for me to be surprised at a rock turning into a goat since the forbidden spell [Another World] can create plants and fish, but looking at a rock turning into a goat before my eyes was amazing.

Unlike all the magic up until now, I didn't get [Primeval Magic] skill.
Since the Ancient Dragon itself doesn't have the skill, I guess it's only natural.

『You just do it like that. Kuro, cook this goat.』
『Fumu, one is not enough, but using Primeval Magic is tiring so I don't want to do it again.』
『Then, I'll bring them here from a certain place.』

After telling so, I brought around 20 goats from the live stock-farming [Another World].
I take out the whale meat too while I'm at it. I chose half the body of the whale since I'm treating the huge Ancient Dragon.

『That's quite a huge fillet.』
『Umu, it's the Great Monstrous Fish's fillet. It's good y'know.』
『T-that Great Monstrous Fish huh. Those guys can eat my breath and they're quick to escape into the bottom of the sea, they're bothersome so I've never eaten one.』

The Ancient Dragon is looking at the whale's half body interestingly.
I start to cook using [Magic Arm] and [Forge].

The dragons are smiling at the smell of the roasted meat.

I think back upon the Primeval Magic earlier while looking at them.
You probably have to do something after saturating the magic power, but I don't understand what to do after that.
Like sending signal by pulsing electricity, I think you need to create waves from the saturated magic power and produce some kind of magical phenomenon from it, but I don't have any proof in that.

--Hm?

A music with megavolume pulled me back to reality.
Apparently, the Ancient Dragon and Black Dragon are humming.

--Ooh, amazing.

Green buds have begun to sprout from around the Ancient Dragon and Black Dragon.
I can feel waves of magic power, this appears to be a type of Primeval Magic.

The greenery spread vigorously, flowers are blooming spectacularly.
There are even some rare things called Spirit Grass and Bewitching Flower among them.

Looks like trees and shrubs have begun growing in far-off.

The spring and lake created in a slightly distant place must be of the Dragon Spring Liquor.
I guess the one created by the Ancient Dragon should be called Dragon Lake Liquor huh?

『Kuro, put demigla on this goat.』
『On mine too please.』

It's easy to put on the sauce since it's whole roasted, but my demi-glace sauce stock is running low.
Using space magic [Telephone] I ask Lulu to make more.

『So good, this tastes so good! Heiron, you've found yourself a good servant!』
『Wrong. Kuro isn't my servant, he's a friend.』
『Fumu, friend huh. I will use Primeval Magic to make the things you want if you give me more delicious dishes. At present, you want to turn dragon's fangs and claws into weapons right?』

When I was listening to the two while dismantling the Kraken and the deep sea serpent, the Ancient Dragon told me that.
Might as well, I take out Bouryuu's fang for the occasion.
I've cut it a bit to make some tool, but it's mostly intact.

『Could you turn this into a sword?』
『Fumu fumu, I can but after the banquet is over. Humans must not be hasty.』

The dragon is right, you've to enjoy the time to enjoy yourself fully.

I make fine white noodles from the huge squid and sashimi from the deep sea serpent.

The sashimi's accent isn't enough since I haven't meet any wasabi monster. As expected, using common wasabi isn't enough for this size.

I deep fried the deep sea serpent's bone with meat, creating a super huge bone senbei.
I can make deep-fried food using little oil with fry cooking magic, it's quite convenient.

『The senbei is better than the sashimi. This is how it's like when you fry things in oil huh.... Humans sure come up with amusing things.』
『I don't like it much. Goats are better after all.』

Crackle crackle, with very loud sound the Ancient Dragon bit the super huge bone senbei.
Black Dragon who was attracted by that tried the bone senbei, but he didn't like it much.

Once the two's appetites were appeased to a degree, I was also freed from cooking and began to drink the Dragon Lake liquor while snacking on the squid dish.

The moment I put the Dragon Lake Liquor into my mouth, strong smell pierced through my nostrils. After a bit, I got used to the tongue-numbing strong alcohol, then a rich mild flavor permeates.
The taste is different from the Dragon Spring liquor, but this one is quite a good liquor too.

I'd like to let my dwarf acquaintances who like liquor to drink this.
I'll share the remaining liquor later.

『Still, it looked like you really rampaged violently, did your Inverse Scale got wounded?』

Black Dragon suddenly turned his head and asked the Ancient Dragon.

『Fuhahaha, such idiot has not appeared for the past 10.000 years. I just couldn't put up with the scuffle between the demon lord and the little ones on the mountain nearby.』

Apparently the wasteland on the northern half part of the continent is the trace from the time the Ancient Dragon rampaged to defeat the demon lord.

I see, so this is an example of the [the damage is great when the dragon intervenes] talk.
The damage is bigger than my Meteor Shower combo for sure.

The [Demon Lord of another continent] spoken in the oracle was probably from here.
Only the ones in the Weasel Empire and the Ratkin Principality remain.

I had tried searching in the Ratkin Principality near Shiga Kingdom, but I couldn't find anything that seemed like the demon lord.
The [Trazayuya Maze] is located near the Ashrat Principality after all, perhaps the last demon lord is what Zen would have become.

◇

"Eh? So you went today and were taught immediately?"
"Yeah, these are the Dragon Fang swords and Dragon Fang daggers that I got."

Affirming the surprised Arisa, I show her the swords created by the Ancient Dragon.

I had more of the lesser Dragon Fangs, so I asked the dragon to create two

Dragon Fang swords and several Dragon Fang daggers.
Looking at the fang's volume, there should have been some left, but most of the huge fangs were absorbed into into the Dragon Fang swords.
Primeval Magic is quite fantastical.

"Normally you'd get turned down and get to stay sitting down in front of the gate no matter how many times you got sent away, the readers won't feel the suspense like this."

As always, Arisa still loves mixing up fiction and reality.
Even though it's better when they teach you easily.

"Satou, there's a lot of daggers--don't tell me?"」
"Yes, I have one for everyone."

I nodded to Hikaru and put all the weapons on the table.
The Dragon Fang swords are for Pochi and Tama each, the Dragon Fang daggers are for everyone including the late-starters.
I didn't give the Dragon Fang sword to Nana who could use a sword because she won't be able to use her defense with the sword that's too sharp.

The members who are used to getting weapons from me and Lady Karina were simply overjoyed, but Hikaru, the princess, Sera and Zena-san received the swords with trembling hands due to their surprises.

"Amazing, this is a Jingi created from dragon's fang with Primeval Magic...."

Hikaru traces the dagger in her trembling hand.
Calling it Jingi is exaggerating, but there's no mistake that it's of higher class than a common Artifact.

"It can cut the inside of the magic bag, so make sure to put it into the

sheath before storing it into the bag okay."
"Aye aye sir~"
"Yes, nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi stretch out greatly to answer me.

"Satou-san, is it alright for us to receive such amazing weapons?"
"Yes, Zena would be fine, but Her Highness and I can't use weapons...."
"That dagger can cut barrier, so please carry it in cases of emergency."

It cut through the barrier I created with space magic, so they should be able to break through most barrier.

"Dagger that can cut through barrier huh.... I feel excited somehow."
"Nn, anticipation."

Arisa and Mia are smiling while picking sheaths with different colors.

Lulu tilts her head while holding the dagger like a kitchen knife.
It seems she's going to use the Dragon Fang dagger to cook.

"Master, what is that, so I ask."
"This? This is a failure you see."

Nana points at the ill-formed dagger in my hand.
I was able to invoke Primeval Magic somehow after spending half a day and used up most of my magic power, but it felt like I needed more training before I could use it freely.
Looks like it'll be a bit longer before Liza's magic spear reinforcement.

"So, in the end, what is Primeval Magic anyway? Is it an『Iya Boun』type of technique?"
"The Ancient Dragon said that it was magic invoked with your spirit, but if I have to say, I guess it's the root of the『Current Magic』? It's hard to

be used by humans so the『Current Magic』is the form after it's been improved, or something like that."

The part that isn't included in the current magic (mahou)--magic (majutsu) skill has no merit.
I can understand why Primeval Magic became obsolete and the current systematic magic succeeded in the natural selection.

The current magic (majutsu) with the skill support is far easier to use and more efficient.
The support from skill is big after all.

--By the way, I wonder what's the [Iyabon type technique] that Arisa said in Japanese?

Arisa's reference is too old sometimes, I don't know them.

14-SS1: People of the Ancient Dragon Continent

*

"Darn it, not even one dragon scale despite walking this far...."
"It probably means that even the demon lord couldn't hurt Ancient Dragon-sama at all."

Knights in traveling outfits are exchanging words with each other.
A group of 50 people including knights who were dispatched by a kingdom on the south of the Ancient Dragon continent have come to investigate. Everyone is riding a highly mobile Running Bird.

"Ooy! Come here quick!"

One of the soldiers who had gone ahead of the wasteland as scouts greatly waved his hands.
The other four who are with him are captivated by the ridge on the other side of the wasteland, they're not waving their hands.

"Th-this is...."
"I can't believe it."

The young captain snatches the Farsight Tube from one of the scouts and stare at the scenery before his eyes.
A red haired woman vice-captain who appears beside him does the same thing and peer into the Farsight Tube.

"For fertile land to spread beyond the wasteland like this."
"That's not the surprising part, look at there! The city is safe."
"Impossible. I saw it myself when the royal capital of this Katahira Kingdom was burned to the ground by the demon lord's army. The rampart was also half destroyed by a huge demon beast from the demon

lord's army."

Unlike the wasteland that the investigation team has witnessed so far, there are lush greenery and a city with systemically built houses before their eyes.

"We won't know anything from here. Let's go into the city."
"H-however, it might be the demon's trap."
"Then have the summoner to summon a carrier bird and send a report."

After giving the order, the captain whipped the Running Bird and went ahead.

"Scout unit! Go ahead of the captain! Don't miss any danger!"
"""UNDERSTOOD."""

With the vice-captain's order, the scouts hurriedly jumped onto the Running Birds.
Since they're lightly dressed, they probably would quickly catch up with the captain.

The vice-captain takes along the following unit toward the solemn and mysterious city.

◇

"--Does nobody live here?"

Even though there are houses lined up which look ready to live in anytime, there's not even one soul.
There are furnitures installed inside the houses, yet no tablewares nor food can be found.

Unbelievably enough, every house has waterworks and drainage system installed.

"Captain, the door of the central castle is open."
"I see, the rampart gate also opened by itself when we touched it."
"Is it inviting us in?"
"I don't know."

The captain and the others continue their search without stopping even while feeling weirded out.
After wandering in the wasteland for two months, arriving at a ruined city--nay, a city with virtually brand new houses that are left unattended, there's no way they can leave it alone.

"However, such mysterious buildings they are. I've never seen buildings like them before."
"Yeah, they look weak against earthquake."

Apparently, Shiga Kingdom-style stone buildings are unusual on the Ancient Dragon Continent which has a lot of volcanoes.
Houses made with Architecture magic are stronger than they look against earthquake, but none can see through that on their first sight.

They finally get off the Running Birds when they've trespassed the central castle, and then they dip their hands into the fountain in the front garden.
It seems they've judged that the water is safe after looking at the Running Birds poking their heads into the water.

"Looks like it's safe. Let us drink the water too."
"Alright! It's been half a month since we have such clear water."
"Yummm, this sfuff's not gritty to drink."

Unlike the captain who could get drinking water from water magic, the

team members plunged their heads into the fountain and began to drink the water.
The following group who arrived later lost themselves when they saw their companions plunging their heads into the fountain and rushed up to them, the vice-captain scolded them.

"And, does that seems to be here?"
"Yeah, the rampart's gate opens by itself and the fountain is working. It's possible."

Accompanied by the vice-captain and escort soldiers, the captain heads toward the underground passage the scouts discovered.
The escort soldiers were repelled by the barrier on the passage's entrance, but the captain and the vice-captain were able to enter into the lower floor without problem.

"As I thought, only upper nobles can enter huh."
"Probably only people who can become a landlord."

The captain runs toward the blue light shining in the lower floor.

『Welcome, qualified one.』

An overlapping voice of woman and man of unknown age could be heard.
The source of the voice is the crystal body floating in the air--City Core.

『I've been ordered by the previous lord [] to hand over the throne to the first qualified one who come here. Which one of you will be registered as the Land Lord?』

The captain steps forward to answer the City Core.
It seems the two who are bewildered with the situation don't notice that the previous lord name told by the City Core was blank.

"I will inherit it. Former Prince of Natenha, Jeba Natenha will become the new Lord of this land."
『Registering Jeba Natenha.』

The captain's body is wrapped in light, a mysterious light crown appears on his head.

Figures of people living a poor life in a foreign country appears in the captain--King Jeba's mind.
And, the cheering voices of his subjects whom he leads to the new land.

"Your Highness, you look splendid."
"Stop with Highness. I'm the king of this new Natenha Kingdom from now on."
"Yes, Your Majesty."

Disregarding the two who were overwhelmed by their emotion, the City Core asked『Would you like to change the city name from Katahira to Natenha?』at its own pace.

Thus the captain became a prince who obtained a foundation to revive the fallen kingdom as a godsend, but only later on they found out that the city was only made to look like the city before it was destroyed.

The one who reconstructed these cities were not a god, but it was beyond their imagination as ordinary people.
Much less about the purpose of that person; a practical site for magic experiments and expectation for the revival to complete when he comes to sightsee in the future, none could imagine it was for such a random reason.

"Also, Haryu. You be the first queen."
"Jeba-sama."

Apparently the new king has also found his spouse following his kingdom.
As if blessing the two, the song of the Ancient Dragon that rules over regeneration is echoing on the continent.

※ This is the sequel to 14-Intermission 1: Ancient Dragon Continent and Primeval Magic
※ Satou only made the city's buildings, the City Core had existed from the start.

14-Intermission 2: Immigrants of Governor Pendragon

*

◇Royal Capital - Downtown◇

"Good work today, how 'bout we get some drink after this?"
"Sorry, my family's waiting."
"Yer' an unsociable old man."

I waved my hand lightly to my co-worker who cursed me and left the place.
The pay from the construction site today is good, but I've to go to the middleman office first thing tomorrow.

This Royal Capital which we arrived at after fleeing from Lesseu Earldom for our life wasn't a paradise at all.
It's a life where I can't even drink a bottle of ale easily even if I work from morning till night.

"Boruto-san, it's been a while."
"Akindo-san! Long time no see!"

The one who appeared in front of me as I walked sluggishly was a male merchant who saved us when we were attacked by monsters in Lesseu Earldom.

"You're not with the dogkin and catkin children this time?"
"Yes, that is so."

This man is awfully humble even though he said he was a merchant exclusively contracted by a noble-sama.

He's speaking politely even with a mere village liker me.

"How is the life in Royal Capital?"
"Thanks to Akindo-san for getting a place for us to live, we're getting by alright although barely."

I'm really indebted to this person.

"Is that so--if it's hard for you, since Viscount Pendragon-sama is looking for immigrants, how about applying for one?"
"By immigrants, you mean for pioneer village?"
"Yes, that's right."

Looks like Akindo-san who's a merchant doesn't understand how difficult a pioneer village is.

Shaving off your hunger by eating weeds and tree skins, several people will die within three years.
And even when you can finally harvest some crops, the officials will take 'em all.
I don't mind if it's just me, but I don't want to let my child and wife to live such a life.

"I hope you can keep what I'm about to say a secret, about that pioneer land--"
"Is that true?"
"Yes, it is."

Unbelievably, on top of having fields where crops can be planted right away, it's fully equipped with houses complete with the minimum furnitures, what's more there's even water wells that the village can use.
It's too good to be true even if you take it with a grain of salt. You'd normally think it's a fraud.

However, I can't imagine Akindo-san, who lent me several gold coins with no pressure in payment when we just got to the Royal Capital, tricking me.
Rather, if he wanted to trick and turn me into a slave, he'd have asked for unreasonable interest from the first loan.

In fact, the tax collector and village elder who fled from Lesseu Earldom earlier were turned into slaves by that kind of trick.

"T-then I can ask it from you?"
"Echigoya Firm will be acting as the contact. I'm rarely in the Royal Capital after all."

Echigoya Firm huh.... If I'm not mistaken it's a firm managed by the servant of Hero Nanashi-sama.
My wife is also working as a contracted employee in Echigoya Firm's mill, she said that the pay was good even though the work was hard.
Think she was surprised that it was a firm that properly paid as much money as promised in the beginning.

"Thank you, Akindo-san. I'll talk about it with my wife."
"Yes, that's a good idea."

Akindo-san left after smiling.

◇

"Eh~ Pioneer village~. I don't want to!"
"Dear, you forgot the story of our great grandfathers' pioneer village?"

I immediately talked about the pioneer village with my wife and daughter once I got back home, but they strongly rejected it as expected.

Our village only became easy to live in starting from 20 years ago, I and my wife lived our childhood in fear of starvation, so this reaction is normal.

I told the story I heard from Akindo-san in a hurry.

"You're being tricked dad."
"That's right dear. There's no way such thing like having ready fields and houses with furnitures can be true."
"No but, Akindo-san said--"
"That's cause Akindo-san is being deceived too isn't it?"
"That person is a softhearted person who was even worried about us after all."

I still want to plea back, but no way I can win against two women's mouths.

However, even if we cling on Royal Capital forever--.

"We'll hit the wall if we keep this up. We can live without starving cause the food price is stable, but the construction works from the monster disturbance from back then are going to disappear soon. Once the day laborer works decreased, I've to start to seek job in the crowded job market. If my wage decrease, we can't pay the rent here."
"But but, there's also wages from me helping in the bar, and mom's work in Echigoya's mill."

Looks like my daughter who hasn't become an adult doesn't know that being a waitress in a downtown bar is no different from being a cheap prostitute.
The crime number has decreased thanks to the scary guys from the downtown mutual aid society patrolling the area, but that doesn't mean there's no more prostitutes or perverted drunkards.
As a parent, I don't want to let an unmarried daughter to work there

forever.

"Our live would become easier if I became a regular worker instead of contracted in Echigoya Firm...."

My wife put her hand on her cheek and sighed.

I've heard that the people employed in Echigoya Firm in the Royal Capital are well-paid enough to buy their own house, but only educated people and trained in skill can become one.

"That's the Echigoya y'know."
"What is?"

I didn't say it?

"The mediator for the pioneer thing is that Echigoya."
"I-is that true?"
"Y-yea."

I nodded to my wife who suddenly was in high spirits.

"Hey, dad. Where's the pioneer village at? Is it Lesseu Earldom?"
"No, seems to be a village under Viscount Pendragon-sama's administration in Muno Earldom."
"Pendragon! By Pendragon, it's that Pendragon right! 『Pendragon the Woundless』--A Mithril explorer and the one whose female lizardkin spearsman retainer defeated a Shiga Eight Sword!"

My daughter put her feet on the desk and thrust her fist toward the ceiling.
I also know what my daughter is talking about. My daughter heard it from some drunkards, I heard it from someone who liked rumors on the construction site. The story sounds faked, but apparently it's the truth.

"Dad! That story earlier might be true after all!"

According to my daughter, it seems the treasures Viscount Pendragon got from defeating the [Floor Master] were sold for more than 30.000 gold coins.
A merchant's maid who was in the bar seemed to have heard it it by accident in the auction venue.

"Guess it's okay if Echigoya Firm is the mediator. Cause Echigoya is strict with lies after all."

My wife murmured seriously.
Something probably happened at her workplace.

"Then, we're applying?"

The two nodded, and then I went to Echigoya's branch office in the downtown the next day.
It seems they only started the open recruitment in the noon today, the receptionist woman was surprised.

The recruitment was overflowed in a blink of an eyes it became a raffle but it seemed we were treated as referrals from Akindo-san, so we were accepted to be ones of the immigrants.
I haven't met him again after that time, I want to thank him properly at least once.

◇

"A-airship?"
"Dad, we're really immigrating right?"

"We're not being led to become slaves are we?"

My wife and daughter pulled my sleeves from the sides.
I can't comprehend the situation before me.

I heard that Muno Earldom we were going to was on the opposite side of Fujisan mountains, so I thought that we would go around the mountains on foot for sure.
Who'd have thought we'll be moving with an airship....

"Dad, we're like nobles."

My daughter who acted daringly pulled my hand to the airship.
The ceiling is low. When I sit down on the floor with mat, my back touches the neighbor's already.

"This must be why there's a restriction to the luggage."
"Yes, that seems so."

I thought it was strange that there was a restriction from carrying household items even though we were immigrants, but I can understand why now.
I grasped my luggage and tally tightly and waited for the departure.

--Hm, looks like I fell asleep before I knew it.

"Everyone, thank you for waiting. We've arrived at Brighton City of Muno Earldom."

A girl wearing Echigoya uniform opened the door and went around to ask us get down from the ship.
Is Muno Earldom near enough from Royal Capital for the ship to arrive in a nap?

"Unbelievable.... It should have taken three to six months on the land route, two months on the sea route...."

A young man who said that he was a merchant's third son muttered alone.
My daughter is looking at the man creepily from behind my back.

"I heard that even regular air lane needs three days from the Royal Capital and the Duchy Capital, so how..."
"Oh my, you know well. It was a five day trip from the Royal Capital to here. Since we stuffed five time the normal capacity of people, it'd have been difficult in various ways if we flew normally so we put the people to sleep with magic."

The Echigoya female guide cheerfully explained the situation to the merchant's third son.
The reason why they didn't explain it beforehand was because the magic would not work effectively if we knew.

Getting locked in that jam packed place for five days would surely make me lose my mind for sure, so I'm not going to complain.
Come to think of it, I don't feel that hungry even though it's been five days.
You don't get hungry if you're made to sleep with magic huh, the magician employed by a wealthy merchant of the Royal Capital sure is amazing.

"It's a beautiful town."
"It really is, I sure want to stay at this place at least once."
"This area is probably for noble-sama mansions."

My wife and daughter are looking at the white mansions lined up in the townscape longingly.
I want to fulfill their wishes but we're just mere immigrants. No way that

dream can come true even if the whole world got toppled.

"Everybody, your attention please!"

An Echigoya Firm's girl shouted out loud from a tall platform.
There are a young girl who looks like a noble and a white haired young man with a wound on his cheek standing behind her.

"Who's that princess?"
"Maybe she's the lord's wife?"
"No way, why would the wife greet mere immigrants herself?"

Rustles spreads amongst the immigrants.

"Quiet please! The acting lord will make a greeting."
"Nice to meet you everyone, I'm Lina Emlin the acting lord. I may trouble you due to my lack of experience, but please consult to the city hall freely if you're troubled with anything."

Looking at the teenage acting lord who was desperately spinning her words, I have mixed feeling of anxiety and wanting to support her.

"Thank you very much acting lord-sama. We have a lot of experienced public employees in the city hall so do consult to them."

Echigoya Firm girl added something, it seemed she sensed the immigrants' worries.

"The villages everyone is going to can already accept new people anytime, but since the day will end if we go now, we'll be going tomorrow."

Then we're going to sleep in this city today huh.
Since grass is growing on the open space for the airship, looks like we'll have some good place to sleep on.

"Please head to the lodging inn. Land lord-sama is paying the lodging charge, today's dinner and tomorrow's breakfast, so please use them freely. I'll be guiding you according to the tally's color. And also, we've taken your luggage to the inn."

....This too much good treatment made me feel anxious instead.

Isn't it too generous no matter how you look at it?
Letting us sleep in the open space and providing warm soup would have been enough to make us shout "Hurray for Lord-sama", yet they even provided lodging and meals....

What does the lord want from us?

◇

"It was an amazing inn wasn't it dad."
"The food was delicious too~"
"You're right...."

I'd be happier if I didn't know that the lodging cost one gold coin for each room and the meals cost three gold coins....
I accidentally heard that from the employees' conversations.
When I think about earning five gold coins, just how many years would that take.

We put our luggage in the cart in the lodging's courtyard.
Pulling the cart was an unfamiliar animal called yak. It was like a big goat with brown fur.
Looks like the shepherds who are guarded by envoys are traveling with us.

There are around 50 people going to the same village as us.
There's a lot of unmarried youngsters, and it seems there are some families who have girls as if matching them.

We parted way with the shepherds along the way, and arrived at an open place after climbing a mountain road. There are two wolf statues on both sides of the village's entrance. It's probably the village elder's hobby.
In front of the vast maintained farmland, there are lines of splendid houses that are as good as the village elder's mansion.

"Oy, this soil is great see."
"You're right, it's soft like the soil in a forest."

The men who couldn't wait anymore and jumped to the field and exchanged words.

Don't tell me, the settlement village we're going to live in is this splendid?
Such wishful thinking floated in my mind.

"Everyone, please gather here."

The guide girl called us, and then we gathered while leaving the carts.
Several people came from the village. Everyone is wearing fine clothes.
They must be the tenants of the lord here.

"Good work. This is the settlement village everyone is going to live in."

--What?!

I can't believe it, I look at the other people with asking glances.
I'm too surprised I can't speak.

"These people here are the workers who will help everyone getting used to the village. Please ask them about the village's facilities."

It's really unbelievable.
Field that's twice as big as the one in the Lesseu Earldom's village, and a big mansion that can hold 10 people complete with a barn. There's even a livestock hut even though there's nothing inside.
They say that in one month, land lord-sama will provide us with goats and orange chickens.

Right at that time, the northern part of the village became noisy.

"Oh no! Look at the sky!"

Geh, aren't those rhinoceros beetles.
Even though they look so weak, they're strong enemies, the knights in Lesseu Earldom couldn't win unless they fought in a group.

"Oh my, they're the leftovers from the hunt huh~"

The guide girl muttered carefreely while holding a short wand.

"There's no need to panic. Look--"

The girl points at winged statues knocking down the beetles to the ground.
And then, two wolves which ran from the village's entrance rushed to the beetles.

"Dad, aren't those the stone statues on the village's entrance?"
"Y-yea..."

The one-sided battle ended quickly, and then the statues went back to their places while leaving the beetles' bodies behind.

"I was going to explain later, but there's no need to now. Those statues are

state-of-the-art golems provided by Echigoya Firm by land lord-sama's request. They will defend against burglars and monsters, but they can't cope with harmful animals like wild boars and monkeys, so please keep that in mind okay."

I never hear any village protected by golems.
But, looks like they can defeat most monsters with their strength.
My eyes became hot as I remembered the time when we were prepared to die to repulse monsters while sacrificing several people in my village as we waited for the land lord to get off his heavy ass.

Our life has been made this much easier, I'll grow enough vegetables and wheats to pay the tax next year.

"Dad, this is amazing."
"Dear, we'll have to work hard."
"Yea, let's start the planting today!"

I stepped toward the field while holding a brand new hoe in my hand.

※ Akindo-san is one of Satou's disguises

14-Intermission 3: Satou's Research (1)

*

Satou's here. In this world, there are people who are puzzled to hear that doing research needs money. Do they think that you can research things with just a pen and paper?

◇

"Satou speaking. I've collected the void sky's probe."
『Saze of Beriunan Clan speaking. Is it possible to reuse the probe?』
"Yes, the Ether Drive is just dented, the Mana Accumulator Branch is fine."

While having a long distance talk with no lag with the high elf of Beriunan Clan through [World Phone] magic, I repair the void sky probe. This void sky probe has been deployed by Beriunan Clan's initiative in order to investigate the jellyfish's nest.

I was asked to investigate probes whose communication had been cut, and then I found one of them stuck between the inner and outer planetary debris when I searched with Flash Drive and visual-based Unit Arrangement.
Since I've come this far, I might as well create several space houses with earth magic from several debris and put carved seals for teleport magic inside.
Next I shot the debris toward the deep space, each with different velocity while only leaving one here.
Now I don't need to repeat visual-based Unit Arrangement to go around.

After finishing the extra work, I replenish the void sky's probe magic power and put it back to its planned course.

"Satou speaking. The void sky probe has departed. I've checked the beacon deployment, so you should be able to receive the signal by tomorrow."
『Thanks Satou. Come to Beriunan Forest after this, we'll have a party to show our gratitude.』
"Thank you, Saze-sama."

It seems the research about preserved food is currently getting popular amongst the elves of Beriunan Clan so I'd like to bring Echigoya Firm's new products and talk about various research.

According to the info from the map, there are a lot of large debris on the brink of the current map, so I'm going there to see.

◇

"Ooh, it's a mountain of treasures."

There's a lot of rock debris, but around 30% have iron mixed within.
There's even pure iron lumps among them.
Inquiring the map, a lot are alloys, but I also found marble blocks and gold lump.

It's as if they were discarded into the space on purpose.
I was slightly suspicious, but since they're undoubtedly useful, I put the debris I found en route into my Storage.

Every one of them is as big as a small island, so it's quite a profit even if they were all just iron.

--Crisis perception.

"Geh, aren't these radioactive material."

I erase the radioactive material with space magic [Space Disintegrate] while being surprised with the information on the AR.
Even though it's usable even in time of peace, there's no need for nuclear substance in a fantasy world.
Corpse said that, [Gods used their miracle to turn every radioactive material into lead], but it seems it didn't reach the void sky.

And anyway, when the time comes for me to need it, I can just use space magic or force magic to create nuclear fusion magic.
Further, even though there are cosmic ray in the void sky, there's no problem as long as I use [Astro Suit] magic since the density is low.

I found an especially big lump of iron when I was loitering around the group of debris.
It's shaped like a sword, but there's no way you can swing such a huge sword like this. There's no point to it unless the opponent is as big as the moon.
When I tried to put it into my storage, I was able to without problem.
Looks like my storage's size really is infinite.

I thought of using the iron as a base for the floating continent, but it's too big.
I want something a bit smaller. Thinking the damage possibility if it crashed, perhaps I should make it a floating island instead of continent.

The candidates increased when I lowered the size I wanted.

I found a huge crystal of hard quartz so I put it into the list of candidates.
I also found lumps of corundum and topaz which were even harder, but since they were only as big as the solitary island palace, I wrote them off the list.

Let's make a floating island using this as the base.
The solitary island palace is better as our base camp, but I couldn't resist the appeal of floating island.

Due to my pondering, I forgot to consider the danger in the void sky.
Without realizing it, I had crossed the map and entered the next map.

◇

"Woooo"

'Zuin, zuin', metal-like sounds reached my ears who was protected by [Astro Suit] magic.
The barrier created by the automatic defensive item repelled some silver spears.
The spears look like spear squids.

Apparently, I was attacked by mysterious creatures in the vein of the jellyfish.

They're accelerating in the void sky while leaving red light behind on their paths.
The spear squids which failed its attack disappear into a huge black body I could see in the distant. It's huge enough to be an asteroid.

I did not chase them carelessly and collected information with [All Map Information].
It seems the ones in this are are only 100 of the [Spear Squids] like the ones earlier and the black body ahead.
That's right, that black body is also a mysterious creature read as [Unconfirmed Object].

The [White Ball Space Kaijuu] and [Dark Grey Space Kaijuu] I saw back then were also [Unconfirmed Objects] weren't they.

When I got a certain distance closer, the black body spread itself.
At first it looked like a black starfish, but then its eight tentacles stretched toward me.

--It's a Black Octopus Space Kaijuu!

The tentacles whose tips are divided into small string-shaped things stretched.
The thin strings on the tips look like feathers, but I know that each one of them is as big as a skyscraper.

--Huge.

The diameter of the main body alone might be around 100 kilometers.

No no, that's way too big.
Even the moon is only around 3500 kilometers in diameter.
What's up with its astronomical size.

Even the biggest one yet, the dark gray space Kaijuu's diameter was only about 3 kilometers....
However, it'll be bad if this thing comes to the planet orbit.

I take out an Orichalcum wand and use a forbidden spell suited for long-distance attack.

--Divine Banishing Laser.

The light of the forbidden spell that's been said to cut a continent burns the void sky.

The spear squids that were trying to make a surprise attack on me from behind the tentacles were evaporated in an instant.

When I had cut two of its huge tentacles, it dealt with the laser quickly.
Jet black spheres that are floating around the other tentacles and the main body curved the laser that should have flown straight and absorbed it.
Don't tell me, are those black things black holes?

The octopus that should have been 60 kilometers away got close to me in a straight line like dropped frames.
I managed to escape since I reflexively used Unit Arrangement, but its acceleration is odd.

....Come to think of it the White Ball Space Kaijuu also accelerated like this eh.

The octopus suddenly accelerated again without taking a breather.
Would love to have this inertia-canceling acceleration to be more moderate.

I tried looking for points of attack using advanced light magic [Photon Laser] which only consumed a little magic power, but unfortunately it ended in vain.
It seems the main black body surface can also absorb magic power like the jet black spheres as the [Photon Laser]'s composition loosened when it hit it.

With the help of [Parallel Thought (Thread Think)], I keep thinking while keeping a distance away from the octopus.
There were too many notices from Crisis Perception it's blocking my thought, so I temporarily put them into the log.

Since the combination attacks of the octopus and the spear squids were

too annoying, I created a void sky artificial spirit Full Burnern 4 to play with them.
It's the artificial spirit I remodeled from Beriunan and Burainan clans' research result, on top of being furnished with high powered laser, it's also highly mobile.
It has short operating time, but that's a fair trade-off for its performance.
Even though it's a big artificial spirit that's more than 500 meter long, it looks small since the surrounding scale is just too big.

I'll record the anime-like dogfight of the artificial spirit's fight to enjoy it later, while I myself will fight the octopus.
I repeat several Unit Arrangement and fly about on the center of the map.

--Chiiiii.

It looks like it had read my pattern, the black body waited ahead of me on the teleport point.
With its size, its speed is like a short-range teleport.

My magic power is being absorbed at far higher force than the weaselkin's [Magic Eater] machinery whom I repaired.
If this keeps up my magic power will be exhausted--.

An idea flashed on my mind suddenly.

I landed on the black ground with Unit Arrangement.
It's the octopus's body surface.

Just as I thought, the octopus's body surface can also absorb magic power, my [Astro Suit] has been canceled.

However, don't think you're the only one that can absorb magic power you know?

I execute mid level force magic [Mana Drain].
Unfortunately, there's no advanced or forbidden spell that's more efficient than this one. Of course that's only if I use it.

As its magic power got tremendously absorbed, it's losing its black color, turning white.

--VOWVOOOOOWWWN.

The octopus's scream is transmitted on the black body.
It tried to escape from me in panic, but it's useless no matter what inertia-canceling movement it uses. My [Magic Arm] is firmly wedged on the octopus's white body.

I use the fire magic forbidden spell [<<White Inferno>>] on its defenseless body.
The white flame scoops out the octopus without even leaving an ash.

The spell created a crater several hundred meter wide, but it seems its fat could also absorb magic power so the destructive power of the spell wasn't as high as I hoped.

Even my forbidden spell can't instantly kill this one due to its unrealistic size huh....

--The stars over my head suddenly disappear.

The jet black spheres are approaching to wrap me up.
It seems the octopus wants to kill me using the jet black spheres even if it means injuring its body.

The white liquid from the gouged octopus spews into the void sky.

◇

I look down at it from the void sky.

I was able to somehow escape with the little chance I had. After repeating Unit Arrangement and getting separated around 1000 kilometers away, I wait for the replenishment of my magic power that has been used up on the forbidden spell.

The sword-shaped lump of iron that looks like it can even pierce the moon flashes on my mind.

"If magic is useless, then I can just hit it physically."

The difference in size is too extreme, but I'll do something about it.
I summon the void sky artificial spirit Full Burnern 3. Unlike the Full Burnern 4 earlier, this one cannot shoot laser. Instead, it has long whip-like feelers.
It's an artificial spirit created to launch and carry things into the void sky.

I link eight artificial spirits and make it accelerate toward the octopus. With speed that can tear one's body, even 1000 kilometer distance is over in an instant.

The octopus ran away in a hurry, but this time its gigantic body becomes its undoing.
I take out a lump of rock from my Storage and fling them to the octopus's body.

The lump of rock broke on the octopus's body surface, but the broken pieces gouged the octopus.
The suicide attack of the artificial spirits expands that wound even bigger.

--VOWVOOOOOWWWN.

The octopus's scream echoes in the void sky that can't transmit sound.
It's probably transmitted through Ether.

"The way to exterminate a gigantic creature like this is by--"

I plunge into the huge hole opened by the rock buckshot and the artificial spirits.
The wound is closing at great speed, but there's quite enough gap for me to enter.

--Moreover, my velocity isn't slowing down.

I throw a second lump of iron toward the meat wall of the octopus that's closing in.

--VOWVOOOOOWWWN.

The meat wall that's not as tough as the outer skin was pierced by the iron lump.
The lump seems to have arrived at the gastric region of the octopus--in the huge space of the central part. The gastric region is shaped like tear drops, even the shorter ones are several kilometer long.

Jet black spheres appear inside the stomach.
Creatures that looked like the White Ball Space Kaijuu also appeared inside the octopus's body.

I'm amazed to see that it also has ways to attack inside the body.

--However, it's too late.

I take out an item from my Storage.

The sword of iron lump that can even pierce the moon.
Since it's bothersome, let's just call it Moon Piercer Sword.

--VOWVOOOOOWWWN.

Torn by a foreign object from inside, the octopus's scream reverberates in the stomach.

I repeat storing and taking out the Moon Piercer Sword, shaving off the seemingly unlimited HP of the octopus.

The mock-White Ball Space Kaijuu and the Jet Black Spheres come attacking to stop me.
The White Ball Space Kaijuu which boasted high mobility couldn't show its potential inside the stomach with the limited space and got easily mowed down by my advanced light magic [Photon Laser].
The jet black spheres were a bit tough, but once I knew that it could be annihilated with [Mana Drain] by robbing its magic power, it was easy.

More of them came after that, but it was simply a work once you knew how to handle them.
After more than one hour, it finally ends.

>Defeated [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu: Cast-off Skin]!

--Huh? Cast-off Skin?

I store the Black Octopus Space Kaijuu's body into the storage and return to the void sky.
Thousands of White Ball Space Kaijuu that were living as parasites inside the Black Octopus Space Kaijuu are floating in the surrounding void sky, they all simultaneously run away toward the outer space.

An object that looks like the [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu] is escaping ahead of them while leaving a trail like a meteor.

--I won't let you run you know?

I put a marker on the [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu Small].
All set.

I start to chant without chasing it.
It's a magic that I haven't had the opportunity to use even after its completion and has been left sitting on the Magic Column since it's dangerous to use it near the planet.

Once the long spell is over, the [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu] has left the map's edge.
It'll be difficult if I chase after it now.

Therefore, I'll pull it.

I pick the forbidden spell of space magic [<<Aport Any Object>>]
Even though I have completed the chant, I'm only able to choose the second magic from the Menu thanks to [Parallel Thought (Thread Think)] skill.

The [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu] that appeared in front of me is floating in the void sky in blank amazement after losing its velocity.

Then I execute the original forbidden spell that's on stand by.
The Flame of Genesis overflows in the void sky, thoroughly burning the octopus that was trying to leave again. Unlike before, the direction is perfect this time.
The octopus reveals its black body to try to absorb it, but it's meaningless.

It'd be a different story if it was a black hole, but a technique that can

only absorb magic can't go against this flame.
Because, even though it's invoked by using large amount of magic power, the flame is thoroughly a physical phenomenon

"Is it over?"

After the octopus has burned out, something is floating.
I thought it was a small octopus or an egg, but I was mistaken.

"--Sacred Tree Stone?"

The color is black, but the Sacred Tree Stone--a huge object equaling the so called [Philosopher's Stone] is floating.
Did the enormous mana contained within the Flame of Genesis condensed and crystallized the jet black body of the octopus?

I put it into my Storage since it looks useful for many things.
It seems usable as the power source of the floating island.

Since the octopus's cast-off skin has the ability to absorb magic power, using it to make a [Magic Eater]-like tool might also be a good idea.

◇

"Takoyaki yummy."
"This akashiyaki is good too."

The crispy takoyaki with sauce is good, but I also can't leave the dashi-dashed limp-textured akashiyaki alone.
I made them not with the Black Octopus Space Kaijuu's body, but the normal octopus I caught in the sea of the solitary island's archipelago.

"Both are very good it's hard to say which one won."
"Delish~"
"Trivia nanodesu."
"Nn, tasty."

The princess, Sera and Zena-san were repulsed by the strange appearance of octopus so they didn't come to the octopus meet, but Lady Karina was delightfully eating it.
Looks like Mia can eat octopus normally.
I'll retort for once, Pochi, it's très bien, not trivia.

"Putting jerky inside instead octopus would be delicious too wouldn't it."
"Ufufu, would you like to try one?"

Lulu smiles at Liza who said some meat-lover remark.

"Lulu, I also want the prototype, so I inform."
"Tama too~"
"Pochi too, nanodesu!"

Nana, Tama and Pochi were also eager.
Lady Karina looks like she's in agreement, but she doesn't seem to have time to mind it while putting the piping-hot takoyaki into her mouth.
Relaxedly eating snacks with everyone really is a special time isn't it.

I'll have to think of menu that can be enjoyed by Zena-san and the others too next time.

◇

"It sure is big~"
"It can only float yet though."

I put the debris island installed with floating engine from space into my storage and then carried it into the desert sub-space.
It's far smaller than the Moon Piercer Sword that defeated the black octopus, so it was easy.

The floating engine which makes this island floats isn't using the Darkness Stone manufactured in the elemental stone factory in the void sky, but the lump of Darkness Crystal Orb I found in the black octopus's body.
The Darkness Crystal Orb is a high-purity crystal that's rarely created during the darkness stone production.

I also found some high-purity metal crystal, lumps of corundum and topaz and many others inside the octopus.
Looking at its structure, they were all near its excretion hole.

The lump of crystals in the group of debris were probably the octopus's excrement which were processed and not needed inside its body.

The figure of the black octopus gnawing planets flashes on my mind.

"Must've been my imagination."
"What is?"
"--It's nothing."

I smile at Arisa who looks worried.

"Oh right, I've created some new gravity control magic and inertia control magic. Do you want to try flying together?"
"Really? I want to fly--you've tested it before right?"
"Isn't it obvious?"

I immediately denied Arisa's remark.

Using it on my companions without testing first is too dangerous after all.

I invoke gravity magic's [<<Gravity Control>>] and force magic's [<<Inertia Control>>].
In case anything happened, I could just use [<<Inertia Cancel>>].

I fly with Arisa and look at the dolls that are working to shave off the surface of the floating island.

"It looks like it'll become a seedling ship that flies off into the outer space. Master and me like Adam and Eve, oh how wonderful."

I heard some thoughtless words from Arisa, but I lightly ignore it.

Moreover, the void sky is a danger zone worse than this world you know.
Normally it'd be straight path to the bad end in nightmare mode.
It's totally not possible until I've conquered the whole map of this star system.

Moreover, the floating engine can only absorb gravity, it has no way to move in the void sky.
If I can put the magic I used just now to practical use and make the gravity control engine, the island should be able to move in the space.

First, maybe I should make an artificial spirit graviton version to investigate out of the system.
I smile complacently, having got a new idea for my research.

14-Intermission 4 Satou's Research (2)

*

Satou's here. The world's distance has narrowed down since the introduction of the internet, but it seems it's not zero. Transmission lag in conference calls with people from overseas weighs on my mind.

◇

『--Master, can you hear me?』
"I can. It's a bit too far, so the voice is lagging."

I talk with Arisa who's in the solitary island palace through the space magic [Unlimited Telephone (World Phone)].
While waiting for the reply due to the long lag, I gaze at the fountain of blue light gushing out from a black disk.

Dear me, I never thought the day would come for me to look at such superb spectacles.
I want to let everyone see this someday.

『But, didn't you say that World Phone had no lag even if we were far away?』
"Normally, that's the case--"

Since I've made a base point for the Unit Arrangement here, I move to the desert sub-space.
Looking at the Menu, my magic power hasn't been consumed besides for the [World Phone] usage. My [Unit Arrangement] really does not consume magic power regardless of distance.

『--Normally?』

Arisa said in askance through World Phone.

"I just went to somewhere slightly far this time."
『Huh? The voice isn't lagging.』

I put the void sky clothes for use in the outer space into my Storage and came back to the solitary island palace.

"That's cause I've got close to you."
"Master~?"
"Nanodesu!"
"Satou."

I catch the jumping youth troupe and confirm Arisa's business.

"Oh it's nothing urgent. I heard from Aze-tan that high elves from another clan were asking for Master so I wanted to tell you."

It's probably an invitation to banquet from Burainan Clan.

"Burnt smell."
"Burnt burnt~?"
"It's the smell of burnt meat nanodesu."

The children who are rubbing their faces on me are looking up at me with worried looks.

"I just got a bit too close to a fire source."

I was nearly charred.
It seems the smell from the spectacle I watched earlier that was on the void sky clothes remained.

"Mou! Don't do anything dangerous."
"I only realized at the actual site that the heat was that scattered."
"Geez, I don't know if you were in a volcano or the planet mantle, but please stop being rash."

Arisa is unexpectedly a worrywart.
I show the crystal I got from the fire source this time to Arisa and the others.

"Pretty~?"
"It's glittering nanodesu."
"Fire Crystal Orb? Light Crystal Orb?"
"What's that? It looks pretty but I can feel vast magic power from it."

It was something I created from experimenting with Primeval Magic.

"This is an elemental crystal that has both fire and light elements. Right then--"

I stare at the crystal that looks like a small sun.

"--Should we call this Sun Orb?"

I've decided to fuse the Sun Orbs into Arisa's and Mia's wands.
Of course by using Primeval Magic.

Primeval Magic needs enormous amount of magic power and makes me tired, though not as bad as Ancient Dragon's, so I don't want to use it much.
However, it sure is useful for making peculiar magic tools like in this case.

◇

As expected, Aze-san's business was about the banquet invitation from Burainan Clan.
Since Aze-san couldn't leave Boruenan, I went with my companions and attendants.

"Hohou, gravity magic huh--interesting."
"Yes, it was something used by a greater demon."

I give the introductory book of gravity magic to the high elf-san of Burainan Clan.
Only 10 basic spells are written in it.

Magic that can be used once I can chant them are not limited to human magic. I'm now also able to use dragon language magic to create dragon spring liquor and demon magic.
Gravity magic was a magic used by the blue-skinned Nari demon that appeared in the opening performance of the [Golden Wild Boar King] fight in the Duchy Capital's underground.

I had trouble analyzing it since there were only two spells which I copied by ears.
After understanding the way to interfere, create and annihilate graviton, everything after that are all my original magic.

I might even be able to create a small black hole if I gathered all the magic power on the planet.

"You're only teaching Keze of Burainan, it's unfair!"

The one who forced her way between me and the high elf of Burainan Clan was the high elf of Beriunan Clan.
Both of the clans like to research, but unlike Burainan Clan who are like

investigators, Beriunan Clan regards Burainan Clan as a rival.

"Saze of Beriunan huh. Can't you at least greet when you're visiting other clan."
"Oh spare me, we've known each other for 100 million years. We're like family right."

Miss Saze slides onto my lap like an eel.
Tama and Mia who were absorbed in the banquet looked at Miss Saze with "Oh no!" expressions, but it seemed they lost to the dishes' charm and went back to eat them.

"This is a thanks for letting me inspect the library of Burainan Clan freely."
"What! Then you can also look at Beriunan's library all you want, so give me magic book too."
"That's fine by me."

I took out a gravity magic book from my satchel and gave it to Miss Saze.

I'm not hiding the introductory books anyway, and I've also given it to Aze-san and Boruenan Library.

"Hee, so this is also preserved food... There's no taste?"
"That is because these Chlorella pills are specialized for mass production and long-term preservation."

The reason why it's lacking taste unlike the ration in the snow kingdom is to prevent it from destroying the market of the existing preserved food.
Rations created with Lulu's involvement are too delicious.
I've developed this to help places where disaster or famine occur.

Lulu and Chlorella rations are being endlessly produced by the dolls in the satellite factory in the void sky.

The most troublesome process, freeze-drying, can be done there with low cost.

The factory can create 100.000 of the former food in a day, and 10 times of that for the latter as long as the ingredients are available.
Moreover, since the latter's ingredients only consist of Giant Kelp and Deep Shellfish that clings to the kelps, there's no fear of them running out for the time being.
The Giant Kelps that extend from the trench to the surface are ridiculously big.

"Might as well make sweet preserved food."
"Mold grow easily on sweets you know."
"Then you can just seal it."
"The canned peach pickles with syrup are delicious aren't they."

The high elves of two clans are talking about the preserved food in excitement.
Looks like I've successfully planted interest about preserved food to the two.

"Right, I've got my hands on this thing--"

I ask them to analyze the pitch black [Philosopher's Stone] crystal that I got from the black octopus.

"What is this?"
"It looks like a kind of Sacred Tree Stone."

The two high elves look at the crystal's light with interest.
I think the only difference is in its color, but I sure want to know if there's any meaning behind that.

◇

After the banquet was over, we went back to Boruenan Forest.

"Aze-san, I've brought you some souvenir."

Aze-san who usually welcomed me pleasantly keeps looking at the other way.

"Is there something wrong?"
"I don't care about Satou."

Aze-san who turns her face away again makes me want to tease her.

"Aze-sama is burning with jealousy about the matter of Saze-sama of Beriunan Clan sitting on your lap."
"W-wait, Lua!"

Lua-san who usually looked like she'd vomit sugar at us flirting made the first move.

"It seems she's also sulking about the matter of you receiving『Solemn Harp of Beriunan』from Saze-sama and『Tranquil Bell of Burainan』from Keze-sama."

The things Lua-san mentioned are a sign of friendship from a particular clan, you can get various accommodations if you show them to that clan. Leaving that aside, I'll explain the thing with Miss Saze.

"I'm sorry, Aze-san. Since Saze-sama's gestures are childish, I inadvertently reacted like I was with letting Tama and Mia sit on my lap."
"Mwu."

Mia seems dissatisfied with my apology.
Tama who's on my lap muttered "Don't worry be happy~", and made happy sounds with her throat in contend.

"Then, would you consult me about the preserved food too?"
"--What?"

Aze-san, what are you saying?

"I can't?"
"No, that's not it, I consulted about it to Nea-san first and foremost you know?"

It's basic to consult about it first to the elf chef of Boruenan Clan, Nea-san.

"Is that so?"
"Yes, I got various idea."

In the first place, Aze-san declined about it with a single word before I could even consult her, but she might have forgotten since I didn't express it as something important.

"Alright then."

Aze-san pushes her hand in front of me while still looking at the other way.
She's holding a wooden bell on her hand.

"This is?"
"It's the Calm Bell of Boruenan. It's something given to trusted people who come to this forest to study."

Huh? Does that mean that I wasn't trusted?

"I-it's not like that! It's not that we didn't trust Satou! I forgot to give it to you since I felt that you were always a member of our clan."

I act coolly by not smiling my whole face with the help of Poker Face skill.

"Thank you very much, Aze-san."

Thanking her for two different things, I take the [Calm Bell of Boruenan]. I'll wear it always when I'm Satou.

"Right, although this is not meant to be gift in return--"
"It's a beautiful amulet."
"It's an equipment to cope with magic absorption called『Magic Eater』."

This is only effective for its wearer, but it can protect against 10 times the power of the Weasel Empire's [Magic Eater].
Since the power of the [Magic Eater] created from the black octopus material is unbelievably high, even the equipment I gave to Aze-san can't prevent it.
I intend to store the material away since it's too dangerous.

In addition, since the material from white gem space kaijuu has the same ability as the black octopus's, I've created magic-sealing tools from them. This one can be prevented easily by the equipment I gave to Aze-san. Nothing can replicate it since the material (black octopus) is too peculiar anyway, so these equipment should be quite useful for my companions.

◇

"Satou-san, what are you searching?"

"Records about divine punishment in the past."

This place is the forbidden library of Tenion Temple in the Duchy Capital.
I came after getting the permission from the elder head-miko, presently a miko apprentice, Lily. Of course, Lily got the permission from the present head miko and temple head.

According to Princess Shistina, books regarding belief and miracles are more complete here compared to the books in the kingdom's forbidden library.
Apparently, these books have been handed down from the time of the Orc Empire before Shiga Kingdom, or even older than that.

"There sure is a lot of priests that misrepresented things as god's divine punishment."
"Yes, unfortunately, there's always some imprudent priests no matter the age."

When the little girl Lily said such things with a serious look on her face, she looks like a child who's trying her best, it's heartwarming.

"Satou-san, this slate here has records older than Furu Empire era written!"
"Ara ara, oh Sera. I was going to guide him there later."

Lily sticks out her tongue and makes a face that looks like a child who's failed in her mischief.

"Let's go, Satou-san. Records about big divine punishment probably only exist in things that are more than 1000 years ago."

Are the gods more mild than I thought?
I imagined them like [Wrathful Gods] from the Dog-head's and Corpse's

talks, but perhaps they seldom intervene directly.

Let's stop judging them as evil unilaterally.
They do give forecast of demon lords and great disasters through oracle after all.

That said--.

"These divine punishments seem to be quite merciless."
"Oh my, you can read the slate from the age of gods?"
"Yes, it's the same language as the ancient language dictionary that Sera-san found."

Written there, a divine punishment made 80% of the people living in a continent to go extinct through flood and glacier. It's quite severe.

Such a severe divine punishment happened several thousands years ago, after that the scale got gradually reduced.
Most calamities come from the rampages of monsters from dungeons and monster dominions all over the world, attacking cities near them.

◇

"I have read the document you submitted."

After saying that, Earl Seryuu throws the copy of the report onto the table.
As Kuro I'm visiting Earl Seryuu's castle and meeting the earl.

The report the earl read is titled [The Possibility of Divine Punishment and the Critical Situation of Seryuu City].
I've also given them to the king and the prime minister, and also to the

important people of Labyrinth City Selbira with slight alterations for the city.

In case of the labyrinth city, they have various ways to deal with monsters before they can jump out of the labyrinth, and there are explorers and former explorers that can fight in the city itself.

However, that's not the case here in Seryuu city.
Their military is powerful, but the common people are all ordinary people. They don't have ways to cope with monsters that overflow from the labyrinth.

"As long as you understand the content. What I want to know if there is an impregnable defense line situated around the labyrinth's entrance."
"None. There is no budget to set up such a ridiculous thing."

Figure. Seryuu city is currently in the midst of investing things.
They won't have enough money before the labyrinth is on track.

"No need for money, that line should've been written there I believe?"
"I do not intend to create a debt."

I'm not going to demand gratitude, but there's no way Earl Seryuu can believe that with his position.
As for me, I don't mind as long as the people of the Gate Inn and Nadi-san of worker guild, and also Semone-san are fine.
I guess I'd be happy if Viscount Belton family are safe.

"I see, then you should at least take proper measure for when monsters overflow into the city."

After saying that I teleport away from the earl castle.

The destination is a large warehouse inside Seryuu City. Since there's no

Echigoya branch office in Seryuu City, I've bought it as Akindo-san with Viscount Pendragon's letter of introduction.
It's just a stone's throw away from the labyrinth.

There's no one here, not even Echigoya Firm's personnel.
I've only contracted Nadi-san of worker guild to go around here once a week.

I summon Zena-san here with Unit Arrangement.

"So the negotiation broke down?"
"Yes, regrettably."

Looks like she understands the situation after seeing herself got summoned.

"Then, I'll be counting on you to persuade them."
"Yes, Satou-san."

Zena-san gathered 10 people.

As Kuro of Echigoya Firm, I plan to power-level these people in 10 days to be the emergency defense force while also thinning out monsters in Seryuu City's underground labyrinth.
Aside from Zena-san's little brother and the handsome middle-aged Garleon priest, the remaining eight people are all female soldiers of the territory army. There's no magic soldier, but since I'll be the one exterminating the enemies anyway, there's no problem.

◇

Without succumbing to the rumor about a dangerous group gathering in

the warehouse every night, we've successfully cut down about 80% of the monsters in the labyrinth's middle layer and deeper.
Since the territory army was patrolling in the upper layer, I opened a teleport gate in the middle layer and deeper, but there were only small fry contrary to my expectation.
Due to that, everyone besides the handsome middle-aged priest only barely broke through level 30.

Among the eight female soldiers, three have learned [Earth Magic], and the remaining five have learned [Water Magic].
Since I've made them learn the way to fight monsters using golems like Princess Shistina, they should be able to be the defense even if Labyrinth Hazard happens.
<TLN: Resident Evil is called Bio Hazard in Japan.>

"If the monsters overflow from the labyrinth, destroy the water tank there to flood the labyrinth."
"""Yes, Kuro-sama!"""

The young female soldiers gave a good reply to my instruction.

"Take these, you two."
"Is this wand made from an old tree? The circulation of magic power is wonderful."
"No, that's made from the World Tree's branch. It's a valuable item granted by the Fairy Queen, so treat it carefully."

The handsome middle-aged priest received it timidly.
The thing about getting it from Aze-san is a lie, but it really is made from the World Tree's branch.

"Magic sword? N-no it's not--Kuro-dono! Isn't this a holy sword!"
"That's right, it has special effect against monsters. Do not ever assume yourself a hero and plunge into swarms of monster. Think of that as a flag to evacuate the people."

I've thoroughly trained Zena-san's little brother to be the shield-user and guide.
His technique is equal Nana when she was level 30. Furthermore, unlike Nana's force art, I made him learn earth magic that were optimal for defense.
He hasn't learned Magic Edge yet, but he has [Diamond Shell], [Endurance Reinforcement] and [Physical Reinforcement].

I'm sorry for this young one, but his duty is to guide and evacuate people until the reinforcement come.

Further, I've given the basic equipment set disguised like territory army's equipment and ring-shaped magic invocation object to the female soldiers.
The golems commanded by the girls are shaped like stuffed toys so that the common people won't get scared of them.
I've asked Nadi-san to lend small stuffed toy golems to the minstrels inside the city.
Their movements are traced from Tama and Pochi's cute movements, so I have no doubt that they'll be quite popular.

"Take care of Seryuu City okay."
"""YES!"""

Leaving the students, I came back to the solitary island palace.
Now then, it's about time we go to the Weasel Empire.

Credits

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